

KASHMIR

THE INCREDIBLE FREEDOM-FIGHT

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af
A.H. SUHARWARDY
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JANG PUBLISHERS, LAHORE

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1991

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First	Edition:	August 1991
Quantity:		1000
Price		Rs. 75
Overseas		7 US\$
Title Design		Anees Yaqoob
Production		Gohar Sultana Uzma
Incharge		Muzzafar Mohammad Ali
Printer		Jang Publishers, Press
Publisher		Jang Publishers, 13-Sir Agha Khan Road, Lahore.

GL
PL 980-SA
8-26-93

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PREFACE

Although a few books by Indian writers on the current developments in Occupied Kashmir are understood to have been published, it was really "Unhappy Kashmir - The Hidden Story" by Dina Nath Rama, an Indian journalist published in 1990 from Delhi which induced and inspired me to make the present attempt to chronicle the on-going freedom-fight in the Kashmir Valley. I stumbled upon Mr. Raima's book while browsing in a bookshop in Islamabad and purchased it for Rs. 300/- in the hope that it would help me to see the Indian view of the situation. That the book is biased and lop-sided is understandable, but that it is full of blatantly false statements is shocking. I would like to cite just two examples. On page 47, Mr. Dian Nath makes a statement that Lord Mount-batten wanted Kashmir to be a part of Pakistan. The authority quoted in support of this statement is of no less a person than Pakistan's implacable enemy, Sardar Patel's Secretary, Shankar. The second bold and big lie on page 45 is that Churchill asked Mountbatten before the latter's taking over as Viceroy that he must make sure that not a hair on an Indian Muslim's head was harmed. The obvious insinuation is that Indian Muslims were tools of British imperialism. Both the above statements fly in the face of established facts. What is worse about Mr. Rama's book is his deliberate failure to follow the standard practice of specifying the page of the book on which he relies, the year and place of its publication and the name of the publishers' firm or company, to make verification, difficult.

The present volume attempts to briefly explain the background of the current freedom-fight, highlight the heroism of the fighters and expose the atrocities of the Indian Government. An obvious handicap is the paucity of authentic material, particularly because the armed resistance to India is so recent. Besides drawing upon his personal knowledge, the author had to ransack libraries in search of Indian newspapers and magazines, old and new, to be able to quote references to neutral or hostile sources.

Abdul Haq Suharwardy
48/H, Lalazar,
Rawalpindi Cantt.

Chapter 1

Legacy of Injustice

The current freedom-fight in Indian-Occupied Kashmir is as much a result of the ardour, aspirations and activities of the freedom-fighters with the moral, political and diplomatic support of Pakistan, as of the injustices and atrocities of the narrow-minded Hindu rulers or their agents, with the overt and covert support of the Government of India. Kashmir has been subjected to inhuman - and sometimes incredible - excesses since 1846 A.D, when she passed into the hands of the Dogra chieftain, Maharaja Gulab Singh, for a sum of seven and a half million rupees through the infamous Sale Deed of Amritsar, executed by the British conquerors of Sikh territory. The Dogra Hindu rule, extending over more than a hundred years from 1846 to 1947 A.D, was one of the bleakest in the history of Kashmir. So bleak and oppressive was this rule that when Dr. Iqbal, the famous poet-philosopher, who first envisioned Pakistan, went to visit Kashmir, the land of his forefathers, for the first time in the early part of the twentieth century, he got terribly depressed and heart-broken. With tears in his eyes and anguish in his heart, he broke into a dirge on seeing the plight of his compatriots

Dimagash tihi az khayal-e-bulande na shinase ze khud sharamsare
 (His mind devoid of any lofty idea, the Kashmiri does not know his potential and is ashamed of himself)

Na dar deede oo firoq-e-ngahe Na der seena oo dile baiqrare
 (In his eyes, there is no lofty vision, and in his chest no restless heart).

Ba resham qaba khaja az mehnate oo Naseeb tanash Jama-e-tar-tare

(His master is dressed in precious clothes because of his sweat and toil, but he himself wears rags).

Torn apart by this heart-rending situation, Iqbal raises his hands heavenward in earnest prayer and says:

Az aun mayy fishaan Qatra-e bar Kasheeri

Ki Khakistarish aufreenad sharar-e

(O Lord! Pour a drop of that wine on Kashmir which produces from her ashes a flame.)

Iqbal did not live to see his prayer answered and dream come true, but we are seeing today an incredible scenario unfolding before our eyes. The Kashmiri youth is not only awake but active. With Kalima on his lips and klashnikov in his hand, he has a vision in his eyes and an unflinching resolve in his heart. He is today scaling dizzying heights of heroism, making incredible sacrifices, challenging the military might of India and facing unparalleled atrocities and repression at the hands of Indian security forces. But let us not anticipate that inspiring and heartwarming story. We were talking about the inhuman treatment of Kashmiris in Dogra rule.

Dogra Atrocities

The late Premnath Bazaz, a liberal Kashmiri Pundit of outstanding calibre, quotes Colonel Torrens who wrote his Travels about the rule of Gulab Singh in Kashmir. "They (his Sikh predecessors) had taxed heavily, it is true, but he sucked the very life blood of the people", he writes. Continuing, he says: "They had lain hand on a large proportion of the fruit of the earth, the product of the looms and work of mens' hands, but Gulab Singh skinned the very flints to fill his coffers". 1

He was so greedy that when standing in a crowd of his Muslim subjects, any of his aggrieved subjects could catch his eye by holding aloft a one-rupee coin which would enable him to present the petition to Gulab Singh who ruled Kashmir from 1846 to 1856. 2

Most of the agricultural land was tilled by poor Muslim peasants. But the landlords, mostly absentees, and predominantly Dogra Hindu feudals, got the best in the shape of rent in cash or kind. Lands in Kashmir were cultivated in summer only, because of heavy snowfall in winter. But very often in summer, while he was sweating on his land of which he was usually only a tenant-at-will, the Kashmiri peasant was conscripted to carry on his back loads, consisting of the luggage, ration, arms and ammunition of Hindu officers and men posted to far away outposts in Gilgit and Ladakh, in those days of foot journey, lasting about 25 days from Srinagar, one-way. The modus operandi of the Dogras was reminiscent of the ways

of the European slave-traders who pounced upon poor African negroes in the early hours of dawn for shipment to America, where they were made to work on the cotton plantations of white owners. The Dogra police would cordon off a Muslim village at day-break and carry off all the able-bodied youth for forced, unpaid labour over a distance of roughly 200 miles through an arid, arduous, waterless, shadeless, highly mountainous and rocky terrain. The rigours of the journey were so great that not even ponies could face, much less survive, the hardships involved. During day there was scorching heat and during night freezing cold, as the route lay through areas of very high altitude, including Zojla and Burzil passes, more than 13000 feet high. Dr. Arthur Neve, a British physician, who worked for more than 30 years in the Mission Hospital at Drogjan, Srinagar, is on record as having said:-

I was at Islamabad striving to fight an epidemic of cholera and noticed that coolies were being collected from the surrounding regions, each with his blanket, spare grass shoe, his carrying crutch and light frame of sticks and rope in which to carry and load upon his back. And I was present on the great concourse on an open meadow in front of a mosque when a sort of funeral service was held for those starting on the perilous journey. Loud was the sobbing of many and fervid the demeanour of all, as led by the Mulla, they intoned their prayers and chanted their special Ramzan penitential psalms. Even braver men than Kashmiris might have been agitated at a sight like this, when taking farewell of their loved ones. Who would till their fields? What would happen during their long absence to their wives and children? 3

It will not be out of place to emphasise here that these coolies were not only paid no wage but had to carry parched rice of their own and torn blankets to keep body and soul together. Many of them never returned home. Physical exhaustion, malnutrition and inhuman treatment took a heavy toll because they received less attention than even a pony. Not infrequently, a Muslim youth returning home, with 35 days of journey behind him, was again press-ganged for a fresh journey because the void created by a dead cooli had to be filled. This inhuman institution was a legalised system, called 'begar'.

If the summer was hard for the Kashmiri peasant, winter was no less cruel. During winter months, no farming was possible because of heavy snowfall. In winter, therefore, he went voluntarily for paid labour to the Punjab plains, as against forced labour in summer to the chilly wastes of Gilgit and Ladakh. He had no choice. How else could he pay the heavy taxes on even hearths and windows to the Dogra treasury, bribes to officials and interest to the Hindu money-lenders, besides keeping his semi-starved family alive? As carrier of incredibly heavy loads, he wandered in the towns of undivided Punjab, clad in rags, sleeping in mosques or crowded hovels, slaving during the day,

not infrequently begging in the evening; for he must save to keep the Maharaja's government running. No job was too hard and no work too low if it enabled him to earn a little. And yet the treatment he received in this alien land was sometimes not only unkind but downright contemptuous. He was often an object of ridicule, a despicable, sub-human creature. His tattered clothes, his shabby looks, his illiteracy, his broken and poor Urdu, earned him little understanding, still less sympathy.

Right upto the partition of the sub-continent in 1947, the Kashmiri Muslim suffered a number of legal disabilities. He could not kill even a useless and old cow or bull to feed his starving family. He could not keep firearms; and if he had embraced Islam from being a Hindu, he lost both his family ancestral property.

INDIAN EXCESSES

Kashmir's accession to India on 27th October, 1947 was the drop scene of a long drama of intrigue, force and fraud. Be that as it may, the Instrument of Accession signed by the Maharaja Kashmir, with the active approval of Sheikh Abdullah, provided that Kashmir will exercise full autonomy except for Foreign Affairs, Defence, Currency and Communications which will be administered by the Government of India. Pandit Nehru, the Indian Premier, held aloft Sheikh Abdullah as the representative, leader and voice of Kashmir before the whole world. Sh. Abdullah was more than a personal friend of Jawaharlal Nehru. He was like a family member in Nehru's house where he mostly stayed during his visits to Delhi. A secular, socialist, non-communal and egalitarian India, he thought, was the country with which he had thrown his lot. Little did he suspect that beneath the calm surface of secularism, a storm of extreme Hindu narrow-mindedness and wild passions was raging. The Dogra Hindus of Jammu were not merely in anger but in rage over Abdullah having assumed the reins of power from their clansman, Maharaja Hari Singh. Their hands were stained with the blood and hearts full with the hatred of Muslims, thousands of whose young women they had abducted and raped, thousands of whom they had killed and tens of thousands driven to Pakistan from the predominantly Hindu city of Jammu and its suburbs. They were unhappy with Abdullah for having passed a law which made tillers of land proprietors without compensation, as Dogra jagirdars were mostly hit by this legislation. Soon they found an excuse for clashing with Abdullah's administration. This was the detention and death in a Kashmir jail of Dr. Shayam Parsad Mukerjee for his virulent and highly

inflammatory speeches against Muslim and Abdullah who was unforgivable for having a Muslim name. The Praja Parishad of Jammu, a hard core militant organisation, started an agitation during which it did not merely defy law but also indulged in violence. This resulted in police firing, a few deaths and some arrests. Instead of getting support from the so-called secular central government at Delhi, Abdullah was subjected to a barrage of criticism and calumny. The highups in the Government of India were relentless in their pressure on Abdullah. Surprised, shocked and stunned, Abdullah had to eat the humble pie, release all detenues, withdraw all cases and even pay compensation to all Hindus who had suffered or died. This experience disillusioned Abdullah. Even Nehru appeared unwilling to swim against the strong current of Hindu opinion. Abdullah realised that hideous faces of rabid and narrow-minded communalism lurked behind the secular facade of India.

Nehru had pledged complete internal autonomy to Abdullah. All the six hundred-odd Indian states which had acceded to India were steamrolled into merger except for Kashmir which alone had a Muslim majority and was contiguous to Pakistan. A special relationship, based on the Instrument of Accession, tied her to India. The validity of this document was being debated in the Security Council of the UN. Only three subjects had been surrendered to India by the deed of accession which was called provisional, as Nehru made pledges to Pakistan, Kashmir and the whole world that the final political disposition of Kashmir would be made after a free referendum under the U.N. auspices. Kashmir had her own flag with a plough on it and not the tri-colour flag of India. The Indian Supreme Court had no jurisdiction over Kashmir which was convening her own Constituent Assembly to hammer out her constitution. In a public meeting at Lal Chowk Srinagar, attended by the writer, Nehru and Abdullah publicly clasped their hands in November 1947. Nehru said: 'This is India's hand of friendship' Abdullah said: 'This is Kashmir's hand of friendship'. These public affirmations and gestures were symbolic of a friendship which is always based on equality and not a subordinate-superior relationship. But the Indian Constituent Assembly enacted Article 370 that all central laws would apply to Kashmir provided the Kashmir State Assembly ratified the relevant article. This also meant that all the local laws would ordinarily continue to be in force. The Instrument of Accession had provided for application of only those Indian laws and rules which pertained to defence, foreign affairs and communications. The extension of other central laws was altogether a different cup of tea. Now Kashmir, with Abdullah at the helm of affairs, had a constitution of its own, a flag of its own and a President, known as Sadre Riyast, although he was no other than the young son, Karan Singh, of the former Maharaja. The Praja Parishad of Jammu, headed by Prem Nath Dogra, was an ultra-communalist Hindu

Organisation, as mentioned earlier. It had its sympathisers, supporters and patrons in high places in Delhi. It started an agitation in Jammu to achieve what it said: aik nishan, aik pardhan, aik Vidhan - one flag, one president and one Constituent assembly. Meanwhile, the Delhi bosses, including Pandit Nehru, started pressurising Abdullah to ratify article 370 of the Indian Constitution through the Kashmir assembly. Abdullah was not agreeable. It would have meant the extension of the jurisdiction of the Indian Supreme Court and the Indian Election Committee to Kashmir, besides doing away with the separate flag, separate president and separate flag, separate president and separate national anthem. He wanted to avoid the tip so that the iceberg could not engulf him.

The rabidly communal Hindu lobby at Delhi was also allergic to the special status given to Kashmir. The designation of Prime Minister of Kashmir also stank in the nostrils of the high and mighty in Delhi. In other Indian provinces, Abdullah's counterparts were called Chief Ministers. The plant of accession with India, which Abdullah had planted, was expected to give sweet fruit and comfortable shade. But it was growing into a thorny bush, shadeless and fruitless. With the passage of every day, the iron fist under the velvet glove was getting bared. And this was just the beginning, the rough treatment during the honeymoon. If this could happen today when a plebiscite was yet to be held, what would happen tomorrow after the Kashmiris had voted finally for India? Abdullah was a sadder and wiser man. But Nehru had succeeded in fooling him. Nehru was a devout disciple of Chankya, an unprincipled political thinker, who had written a book in Sanskrit on state craft. This book is reminiscent of Machiavelli's Prince in which deception, lying, subterfuge, stab in the back, distraction of public mind through rituals, fairs and theatres are also strongly advocated. Chankya added some other formulae: your neighbour is your enemy. But the neighbour's neighbour should be your friend. Nehru acted on this. Pakistan, the neighbour was an enemy, but the neighbour's neighbour, Afghanistan was a friend. According to reliable reports, Chankya's book was a Bible for Nehru and he used to place it under his pillow. It was a perpetual source of inspiration and guidance for him.

Abdullah was completely disillusioned. Perhaps he was reminded of the honest advice given by Mr. Jinnah in 1944 during the latter's long parleys with Abdullah and his cohorts in Srinagar. The Quaid had told him that the National Conference leaders could not succeed where he, an ardent advocate of Hindu-Muslim unity and one-time staunch nationalist, had failed. "Son!" said Quaid, "I am old enough to be your father. I travelled on the same political road on which you have started. You will only get frustration but not reach your destination, if you keep on the present Path."

On a trumped-up charge of conspiring against India with a Pakistani emissary at Gulmarg, Abdullah was served with an order of dismissal by Karan Singh, the Sadre-Riyast, on the 8th August 1953. Later in the evening, he was arrested. For nearly 11 years, with a short interlude, he remained in jail with the blessings of his 'dear friend', Jawaharlal Nehru, the Prime Minister of India. A puppet, Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad, was sworn in as Prime Minister of Kashmir the next day. The massive protests and procession against this high-handedness were put down with an iron hand. As a result of police firings, hundreds were killed, many more wounded and thousands arrested and detained in jails.

Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad was not even a matriculate. He had started his career as a low-level employee in a handloom cloth store in Srinagar. Dynamic, decisive and tough, he had made his way to the top echelons of the National Conference which was presided over by Sheikh Abdulllah. He was selected by Nehru to succeed Abdullah because he was prepared to do what the latter was not. The first item on the Indian agenda was ratification of article 370 of the Indian constitution which would enable Indian laws to be enforced in Kashmir. Bakshi lost no time in obliging the Indian authorities. Out of the window went the separate flag and separate anthem of Kashmir. The Indian Election Commission and the Supreme Court had now jurisdiction over Kashmir and any chances of the elections and judicial decisions going against Indian interests were adequately foreclosed. Bakshi and his brothers, jokingly called the B.B.C (Bakshi Brothers' Corporation) made a lot of hay while the sun of Indian patronage shone over them. During his tenure as Prime Minister extending over a period of more than ten years, the Kashmir Muslims started tasting the bitter fruit of having been yoked to India. The doors of the biggest employer in the public sector, namely the Defence Services were closed for them, while Kashmiri Pundits and Jammu Dogras were being inducted in the land, air and naval forces at a phenomenal speed. In about 13 years, by 1960, many non-Muslim youngmen of matric or pre-university level had risen to the rank of Lt. Colonel and Major in the land forces and the two sister forces. This was in sharp contrast with the fate of eligible Muslim boys of equal and even higher educational qualifications. The result was that of the two neighbouring houses, the one belonging to the Hindu started having trappings of prosperity and social status, while that of the Muslim, despite a better educated son with a better physique, continued to wallow in previous poverty. Following the application of central laws to Kashmir, the central Government opened offices of Income-tax, land customs, All India Radio, Controller Imports and Exports etc. in the state, but they were all manned as well as officered by Hindus. The Kashmiri Muslim had to be content with petty posts of clerks, peons, chowkidars, sweepers and water-carriers. Because of frequent outbreak of anti-Muslim

riots in northern India, few Kashmiri youngmen ventured outside the state in search of employment. The few who did, encountered prejudice at every step, except for the near relatives of people like Bakshi who were actively promoting Indian interests in Kashmir. Bakshi made some cosmetic appointments of Muslims to gazetted posts and also made it easier for them to secure admissions to medical and engineering colleges in Kashmir. Some political appointments to prestigious cadres like the IAS were also made but the beneficiaries were mostly the sons, nephews and sons-in-law of Muslim high-ups, rated for their loyalty to the Indian cause.

The economic havoc wrought was even greater. Kashmir had in normal times two road-openings, both to present-day Pakistan. Kashmir's fruit, timber, handicrafts, trade and labour went mostly to today's Pakistani Punjab. Jhelum and Wazirabad, fed by timber from Kashmir forests through the Jhelum and Chanab rivers, were the biggest timber markets of this part of the sub-continent. The un-natural accession cut across these natural economic ties. Kashmir fruit and timber had now to be transported via Pathankot to distant markets in India, escalating carriage costs and making it uncompetitive in comparison with the fruit and timber of Kullu Valley and other areas in Himachal Pradesh. Export of Kashmiri handicrafts abroad was hampered by the minions of Chief Controller Exports and Imports who discouraged Muslim entrepreneurs and delayed their cases. The bulk of Kashmiri Muslims tried to keep body and soul together by all manner of legitimate work within the confines of the state itself. In seventies, after the oil boom, some of them went as doctors and engineers to Saudi Arabia and gulf states. Earlier, many bright boys managed to go to the United States and United Kingdom, mostly as engineers, accountants and doctors. But back home, the Muslims were economically in doldrums.

In the early eighties, many Kashmiri Pundits and Dogra Hindus were holding eminent positions on both the civil and military side in the Government of India. General Malhotra who retired as Indian Chief of Army Staff was a Dogra Hindu, son of Prof. SunderDas who taught Physics in a Srinagar College and one of whose pupils the present writer is. Professor Sunder Das retired as Principal of Degree College Srinagar. There are scores of Kashmiri Pandits and Dogras who retired from the posts of generals, brigadiers, full colonels secretaries and ambassadors in the service of the Indian Government. Some of the many names are those of T. N. Kaul (Triloki Nath Kaul) former Foreign Secretary and then Ambassador to Moscow and D.P. Dhar (Durga Parshad Dhar) for a long period Chairman of the Policy Planning Committee and, like Kaul, later Indian Ambassador in Moscow. The Kashmiri Muslims in the lone Muslim majority province of India, has suffered deprivation. Their names operated as effective bars to their acceptance even in the private sector.

Notes :-

1. Struggle for Freedom, Delhi, Kashmir Publishing Co, 1954.
2. This is Kashmir, Pearce Gervis, London, Cassel & Co. 1954, P. 33.
3. Kashmir Saga, S. Ibrahim, Lahore, Rippon Press, 1965, P. 13

Chapter 2

Accession through Force & Fraud

According to the June 3, 1947 plan, announced by the British Government, India was to be partitioned into two states of Pakistan and India on the following 14th August. The rulers of the Indian states could accede to either of the two dominions, depending on the composition of the population and geographical location of their states or choose to be independent, should this be feasible. The Maharaja of Kashmir and his Prime Minister, R.C. Kak, were both Hindus, but intended to keep Kashmir independent because of their very strained relations with Nehru, the future Indian Prime Minister. This sour relationship stemmed from the detention of Nehru at the state border in June 1946 when he wanted to enter Kashmir territory for defending and assisting his friend, Abdullah, who was being tried for sedition in Srinagar.

The grand strategy of liquidating Pakistan within the first six months of her existence would be greatly facilitated if India could somehow occupy Kashmir. This is what an eminent Indian author has said:

“Occupation of Kashmir was for defeating the two-nation theory. If Kashmir was lost to Pakistan, this will be failure of the Pakistan ideology. Then Pakistan cannot survive long as an independent state”.¹

But the Indian leaders saw two serious obstacles. The first and the most baffling was the opposition of the ruler and his Premier. The former had to be won over and the latter removed. The second serious

snag was the apparent absence of a land-link to Kashmir. This could be surmounted if somehow Gurdaspur district, including its Muslim-majority tehsils of Gurdaspur and Batala, could be awarded to India by the Radcliffe Boundary Commission.

Conspiracy to win over the Maharaja.

The first Indian emissary to visit Kashmir to repair the rift with the Maharaja was no less than the Congress President, Acharya Kripalani himself. He came to persuade the Maharaja to accede to India, but appears not to have cut any ice. The next visitor was the almighty Viceroy and the Governor-General of India, Lord Mountbatten, to whom the 600-odd Indian rulers always paid obeisance as their overlord. Lord Mountbatten, whose perfidious role in securing the sorely needed road-link through Gurdaspur for India, will be described later, wanted the Maharaja to give up toying with the idea of independence and join the Indian Union. Of the 584 princely states, Kashmir was the only one which he visited on 19th June, 1947. According to Allan Campbell Johnson and V.P. Menon, Mountbatten told the Maharaja that he could join any of the two dominions "for which-ever he acceded to would take the state under its protection as part of its territories".² This is a very important admission by the opponents of Pakistan. How did the Viceroy put India on a footing of equality with Pakistan? Obviously, India had no access to Kashmir except through Gurdaspur which was contiguous to Pakistan and a Muslim majority district. How did Mountbatten know, two months before the announcement of the Radcliffe Award, that Gurdaspur would go to India? This shows that something had already been cooked up to deprive Pakistan of Gurdaspur. In any case, the Maharaja was evasive, not responsive. He reminisced about old polo matches, and when it came to serious discussion in the presence of Abell, Secretary to the Viceroy and Col. Webb, the British Resident in Kashmir, the Maharaja pretended illness because of old colic pain. Failing to get a satisfactory commitment from the Maharaja, Mountbatten played his trump card. Nehru was least qualified to talk to the Maharaja as their relations were anything but good. So the last and most powerful weapon in the Congress armoury had to be used. Mahatma Gandhi was not only a leader of towering international and political stature but also worshipped by millions of Hindu masses as the very incarnation of Deity (Bhagwan). He had never been to Kashmir before, during his entire political career, spanning almost half a century, and he never visited Kashmir ever after. He reached Srinagar on the first August and left on 4th. In Srinagar, he met, first of all, the Maharani's spiritual mentor, Swami Sant Dev, who could play a key

role in persuading the royal couple. This paved the way for a successful meeting with the Maharaja. The leaders of National Conference e.g. Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad also met Gandhi and assured him that Sheikh Abdullah should be released to facilitate Kashmir's accession to India. Every party was thus out to butter its own bread. In any case, Gandhi appears to have succeeded where two important persons, the Viceroy and the Congress President, had failed. He persuaded the Maharaja firstly to accede to India at an appropriate time, and secondly to start work for achieving that objective by removing Kak from the post of Prime Minister. Kak had stood like a rock in the hostile and turbulent sea of Maharaja's clan, the Dogras of Jammu, for he himself was a Kashmiri Pandit. The mental balance of the Maharaja must have been tipped by being told:-

- a) That Gurdaspur would be awarded to India and Kashmir would, therefore, have a road-link with the Indian Union.
- b) That Pakistan would, in all probability, cease to exist within about six months of her coming into being;
- c) That Abdullah's release will facilitate accession to India by holding him aloft as a symbol of democratic support from the Muslims of Kashmir.

These points of the dialogue are confirmed by two letters written by Gandhi to Nehru and Patel in which in his characteristic style he informed them of what had transpired. 3

The proof of the pudding is in the eating. Gandhi's visit worked like an elixir. Within less than one week of his departure, Kak, hitherto the most trusted advisor of the Maharaja, was sacked on 8th August and a pronouncedly pro-India, hard-boiled Dogra, General Janak Singh, took over as Prime Minister on 11th August. As the General was old, Ran Lal Batra, a staunch supporter of R.S.S. (a para-military organisation of extremist Hindus) was appointed Deputy Prime Minister, with the blessings of Patel and Nehru to take all necessary steps to achieve the ultimate objective - act of accession to India. On 12th August, a Standstill Agreement was concluded with the Pakistan Government so that the facilities of post, telephone, telegraph and railways in the state could continue uninterrupted. But this was really a camouflage to hide real designs and lull PAKISTAN and her supporters into a false sleep of satisfaction. The hard decision had been taken; the die had been cast in favour of India. Henceforth, India rooled the roost in Kashmir.

The decision to accede to India made the Maharaja uneasy on two counts. The first was the Muslim majority in the state which would be a source of perpetual trouble and danger to his rule. The second was the presence of approximately fifty thousand trained Muslim ex-soldiers, veterans of the Second World War, in Poonch district alone, while his own Dogra army was only about 10,000 strong. Already in April, the Maharaja had after a long time toured

the Poonch district and some parts of Mirpur, adjoining the future state of Pakistan. Even though he was toying with the idea of independence at that time, he did not want his Muslim subjects to dictate terms to him. He was determined to meet this menace effectively.

Immediately after Batra's takeover as the defacto Prime Minister, although he was only a Deputy, he embarked on a number of measures to sort out the Muslim veterans of the Second World War. Steps were also underway to tackle the problem of Muslim majority in the state. Following the Maharaja's visit to Poonch, the problem of fifty thousand time-tested and battle-hardened Muslims caused him sleepless nights. He therefore raised additional forces and organised a new Poonch Brigade and deployed it in all important sectors of Poonch, Bagh, Rawalakote and even Kotili. Previously, there was one Brigade, headquartered at Nowshera, for the internal security of the predominantly Muslim areas of Mirpur. But now this additional Brigade was raised with headquarters at Poonch city. Its personnel was deployed in battallion, company and section strength in strategic locations of the Poonch district. The troops were wholly from Hindu Gorkhas and Dogras, the latter being the predominant element. Poonch was overwhelmingly Muslim. The first order was for all the local Muslims to deposit all their firearms in the local police-stations. Obviously, it would be easier to kill or push out to Pakistan unarmed Muslims. To provoke them into a clash with the Maharaja's troops, the latter started camping in the fields of former without permission and without compensation for loss of or damage to standing crops. The local youngmen were ordered to dig trenches for the army and also serve as porters in areas which did not have even pony tracks. New roads had to be constructed for assuring regular logistical support to troops in far-flung places and here also the local Muslims were press-ganged at the point of pistol. The womenfolk who had to visit springs and streams for fetching water, washing clothes, even bathing, were being harassed with leery laughs and dirty jokes by the Dogra jawans. At a time when the area on the Pakistani side of the Jhelum river which formed the boundary of the state, was in the throes of bitter Hindu-Muslim riots, the Dogra troops sealed the borders with Pakistan and did not allow even genuine residents of Poonch, employed as soldiers, mostly bearers and butlers in the erstwhile Northern Command of the British Forces at Rawalpindi, to enter Poonch from Pakistan which was just across the Jhelum river; even if they did, they would relieve the incoming people, who came by ferries or bridges, of all their valuables besides harassing them as Pakistani intruders. While genuine Muslim residents were prevented from entering their homeland, Hindu and Sikh refugees from the NWFP and Rawalpindi region, all armed to the teeth, were shown special indulgence in entering Kashmir

territory.

The rigorous restrictions on movement of goods and men from Pakistan into Poonch resulted in more hardships to the poor people. Prices sky-rocketed and essential commodities became scarce.

Within about a month, the Dogras went on another spree of repression. The rations they had initially brought with them were finished, and as there were no roads for vehicular traffic, the Dogra Commanders issued another dictatorial fiat. The local revenue officials such as Patwaris, Girdawars, Numberdars and Tehsildars as also the local thanedars and police functionaries were told to inform the local Muslim population to supply the necessities of the army i.e. rice, flour, ghee, fuel and also fodder for the horses and mules of the army. The helpless population, already deprived of their arms, obliged in the beginning; but when their supplies ran out, inevitable in a state of large-scale unemployment, political tension and social unrest set in. They expressed their inability to comply but the retribution was severe and swift. All these excesses were being purposely committed to provoke the local Muslims into a clash with the military which would then get a plausible pretext for killing them, burning their houses and property and forcing those who survived to flee to Pakistan.

A number of such incidents were engineered. In a village called Dhamni near Rawalakote, a Hindu JCO burnt the house of a local Muslim and molested his womenfolk on the mere suspicion of some Muslim relatives from Rawalpindi, called 'Pakistani agents' being in the house. Sardar Ibrahim a member of the Kashmir assembly, had warned in March, 1947, five months earlier, that Rashtrya Savok Sangh, a Hindu militant organisation, had entered various parts of the state territory to exterminate Muslims or expel them to Pakistan. These apprehensions were taking a practical shape. The District Magistrate of Poonch issued two separate orders under section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code; one, imposition of ban on an assembly of five or more persons; and, two, surrender of all arms of every kind, not merely firearms, to the Dogra forces. Col. Baldev Singh Pathania, Revenue Minister and a relative of the Maharaja, was entrusted with the task of exterminating the Muslims, although officially, he was to work behind the smoke-screen of recovering arrears of state taxes. Major Piara Singh, another relative and confidant of the Maharaja, was sent on a roving mission to the various military commanders in Poonch to give them special instructions for the genocide of Muslims in the light of day-to-day changing situation. The Dogra military started burning whole villages on the pretext of finding even one biggish knife during the search of a single house. According to the Stateman of Calcutta, dated February 4, 1948, Richard Symonds, a Quaker said:

"The folly of Dogras who burnt entire villages when a single family was involved, rallied the entire Muslim population".

The repression in Poonch, which was aimed at destroying Muslims or driving them to Pakistan, boomeranged, resulting in a revolt by Poonch ex-servicemen. With the help of firearms they had not surrendered plus those obtained by storming local police-stations and army posts, they liberated a major part of their district. But this was a situation which the Dogras had neither expected, nor foreseen.

Nevertheless, the campaign of genocide did bear fruit in those parts of Jammu province where Muslims constituted a minority. It started in August 1947 when the Maharaja finally made up his mind at Gandhi's bidding, to accede to India. The areas selected were the minority pockets in the rural hinterland i.e. Samba, Ranbirsinghpura, Bosoli, Ram Nagar, Uthampur and Hira Nagar etc. In Ranbirsinghpura, after sealing off the border with Pakistan, an entire crowd of Muslims was machine-gunned by Dogra troops. This method saved precious time of the troops who had many more such missions to perform. The killings have been testified to by independent foreigners. The British editor of the prestigious English *Daily Stateman*, Calcutta, says:

"In Jammu, unlike every part of the state, Hindus and Sikhs slightly outnumbered Muslims; and within a period of about 11 weeks, starting in August, systematic savagery similar to that already launched in East Punjab, Patiala and Kapurthalla practically eliminated the entire Muslim element in the population, amounting to 5 lac people. About two lac just disappeared, remaining untraceable, having probably been butchered or died from epidemic or exposure. The rest fled to West Pakistan". 4

The Hindu Rajputs including Dogras had already the legal privilege of keeping firearms without any license. More arms and ammunition poured in from India. The Maharajas of Patiala, Kapurthalla, Farid Kot and Alwar etc. came to Srinagar to assist and advise the Maharaja of Kashmir how to get rid of the Muslim population. They were best qualified for the job as they spoke with the authority of experience having accomplished this objective in their own states. Most useful was the experiment of Kapurthalla state, where Muslims were in a majority but had been liquidated or forced to flee to Pakistan. The RSS, which stood for the annihilation of Muslims, established its headquarters in Jammu. British Officers who could not be taken into confidence, were replaced by Dogra Hindus. Major-General Scott, Chief of Staff of Kashmir Army, was removed; so was the I.G. of Police, Mr. Powell. The few Muslim officers in the army were disarmed or transferred to far-flung places or removed from their jobs. Col. Adalat Khan, a senior military officer, was transferred to a civil post and made Director of the Food Department in Srinagar. The RSS bands and the Sikh desperadoes (who were very inimical to Pakistan then) fanned out surreptitiously in all directions. It was all planned. After combing out the areas in

which Muslims were in a minority, as in Jammu, appropriate measures for majority pockets would be taken at the right time. There were elaborate plans for eliminating Muslims even from the Kashmir Valley, where they commanded an overwhelming majority. The Government of India, with the strongman Patel in charge of the portfolios of state and Home Affairs, induced the Maharaja to appoint one of their trusted men, Justice Mehar Chand Mahajan (previously the Congress nominee on the Punjab Boundary Commission) as Prime Minister of Kashmir. His prime qualification

for the post was his undying hatred of Pakistan. In his book, "Looking Back", he confesses that he was released from the Indian judiciary for strategic and tactical reasons and was assured by the Indian authorities that he would be given military aid whenever he demanded it. 5 A bigger bigot and rabid opponent of Muslims, Batra, had already been appointed Deputy Prime Minister of Kashmir after 11th August to further India's interests, as the stop-gap Prime Minister, General Janak Singh was too old and somewhat naive to cope with the challenges of his post. According to Batra's advice, Janak Singh's first act however was to ban pro-Pakistan meetings even

in houses, houseboats and hotels. Pro-Pakistan papers were either closed or subjected to precensorship. Lists of pro-Pakistan officials were prepared and intelligence officials directed to dog their footsteps. Mahajan actually took over on 15th October to bring about a quick accession to India. The change in premiership was occasioned by the necessity of closer co-ordination between the Government of India and the Kashmir Darbar, particularly because of the armed revolt in Poonch. 6

The Grab of Gurdaspur

There is widespread belief in Pakistan, even in quarters which take pride in their objectivity, that Nehru used Mountbatten for facilitating, even manipulating Kashmir's accession to India. In order to examine these allegations, we must look for a motive to prove Mountbatten's hostility to Jinnah or friendship for Nehru or both. Was he unfriendly to Mr. Jinnah and did he intentionally work to deprive Pakistan of Gurdaspur and thereby provide the much-needed road-link to India? If so, what are the reasons and what is the proof?

In their first meeting on 5th April, 1947, Jinnah and Mountbatten did not tick together. The latter's Press Secretary, Campbell Johnson quotes his boss as having said: 'My God, he was cold. It took most most of the interview to unfreeze Jinnah'. 7

But the real grudge, a blow to his vanity, which Mountbatten nursed was Mr. Jinnah's refusal to make him the first common Governor-General of India and Pakistan whereas the Congress had been the first to accept him. In the words of Michael Edwards, "The idea was immediately appealing to Mountbatten as it would have been to anybody with a sense of romance. To be the last Viceroy and first Governor-General was quite a distinction". 8 The relationship between Jinnah and Mountbatten never attained warmth; at best it was one of cold courtesy. On the other hand Mountbatten's relations with Nehru were very friendly, dating back to the days when the former was Supreme Commander for the Allied Forces in South-East Asia during the Second World War. Nehru was a family friend of the Mountbattens and was on very intimate terms with Lady Mountbatten. In his book, the Untold Story, General B. M. Kaul, himself very close to Nehru, says;

"Mountbatten first met Nehru in 1945-46 when each made a deep personal impression on the other In fact, a great friendship developed between their families which had many things in common. Mountbatten and Nehru were friends because they were similar personalities. Lady Mountbatten and Nehru were close because she filled a void in his lonely life". 9

Leonard Mosely, a British writer, says that Mountbatten expected Jinnah to propose him as Governor-General of Pakistan in a letter which he awaited in London at the close of May. When the expected letter was not forthcoming, Mountbatten's mood has been portrayed as follows:

"He came more determined than ever to persuade the Muslim League leader that he (Mountbatten) should become Joint Governor-General. It should have been obvious to him that Jinnah, selfish, proud and jealous, was going to allow no such thing, but Mountbatten persisted. It became for him a matter of pride too; and it was rapidly becoming a matter of wills'. 10

Little wonder, therefore, if Mountbatten was animated by anything but friendship for Jinnah and the country created by him. Not only was his vanity hurt; Jinnah's refusal had also caused him embarrassment with Prime Minister Attlee, whom Mountbatten had assured that both Congress and League would agree to his becoming the Joint Governor-General. 11

That in addition to Mountbatten's personal vendetta against the Quaid-i-Azam, Nehru was pressurising him, is born out by the following observations of Sir Conrad Corfield, Political Advisor to the Viceroy and Crown Representative (Mountbatten) in 1947:

"I had other differences with Mountbatten ... but he did not listen to me and when he visited Kashmir (in June, 1947), he did not even invite his political advisor to accompany him as was the custom. Anything that I said to Mountbatten about Kashmir carried no weight against the longstanding determination of Nehru to keep it in India." 12

In the opinion of Lord Birdwood, the award of Gurdaspur alone

enabled India to build a military base at Jammu and consolidate herself upto Uri and other Pakistani sectors. 13

For demarcating the boundaries of East and West Punjab on the partition of the Punjab, an Arbitration Council consisting of three British law lords was proposed by the Quaid, but Mountbatten persuaded him to give up this idea as these old gentlemen would not be able to stand the heat of India. The suggestion to involve the UN to arbitrate the partition of the sub-continent was shot down by Nehru as cumbersome and dilatory. The result was that Cyril Radcliffe, a British barrister of Mountbatten's choice, was appointed Chairman of Boundary Commission whose composition, as decided by Mountbatten, was such that its two nominees each, from the Congress and League, were bound to disagree on every vital point, enabling Radcliffe to pronounce the final decision, binding on both the parties.

Chaudhary Mohammad Ali, who was the first Secretary-General of the Pakistan Government in 1947, reveals in his book 'The Emergence of Pakistan' that when Justice Din Mohammad, League nominee on the Boundary Commission, tried to explain the case of Muslim tehsils of Zeera and Ferozpur (taking for granted that Gurdaspur as a Muslim majority district would inevitably go to Pakistan), Sir Cyril Radcliffe silenced him immediately by saying that the position was too obvious to need any discussion or argument. 14

Radcliffe handed over his award to Mountbatten on 9th August, according to Leonard Mosley, and flew back to UK on 15th August, two days before its official announcement, acting on the maxim 'after me the deluge'. Writing about this, Mosley says:

"He had news in his pocket, but he refused to have it on his conscience. Since 9th August he had been in possession of Radcliffe's Award. The award is officially shown as signed on 12th August, 1947." 15

What happened, one may ask, between 9th and 12th August when we keep in view Campbell Johnson's disclosure that Radcliffe was accommodated in the Comptroller's House in the Viceregal Lodge during these days. 16 "The reason given is that he was given this facility to work in isolation. If the Viceroy was so keen to keep Radcliffe isolated, was there any dearth of houses in Delhi to accommodate him properly for a few days? Would it be unreasonable to infer that Radcliffe was kept purposely in the Viceregal Lodge to facilitate confidential discussions with Mountbatten to award Gurdaspur to India? If the award was given to Mountbatten, why was it signed three days later? Even Campbell Johnson, Press Secretary to Mountbatten, who throughout defends his boss, says that on 9th August, the award was reported to be ready and was discussed in the presence of George Abell, viceroy's Secretary. 17 Obviously, the award was finalised and signed after confidential discussion which

could not have revolved on anything other than Gurdaspur. Why after telling Justice Din Mohammad that the case of Zeera, Ferozpur and Gurdaspur district, (all Muslim majority areas) was too obvious to need further arguments, did Radcliffe write in his award, "I have long hesitated over these not inconsiderable areas east of the Sutlej in which Muslim majorities are found?" Why this hesitation? When he says that it is not in the interest of Pakistan to have these areas, because railway system and the canal system would be upset, the question arises: how was Radcliffe better qualified to know Pakistan's interests than her own representatives and advocates?

So much about the sordid role played by Mountbatten. The Indians have made much of the tribal incursion into Kashmir in 1947. But for this India would not have accepted accession in the manner she did, Indians claim. This is a blatantly false claim. Men may lie, but facts do not. There is plenty of convincing additional evidence to prove that the Congress high-ups in the Indian Government had made all arrangements to grab Kashmir by all means, fair or foul, in fact all foul. In a white paper, issued in January 1977, by the Pakistan Government, grave allegations have surfaced, and concrete evidence has been adduced to prove Indian Government's deep involvement, at the highest levels, to secure Kashmir's accession by force, fraud and underhand dealings.

These damaging pieces of documentary evidence, which throw lurid light on the thinking and methodology of Indian leaders, make sad reading. They show how an apparently great man like Nehru did not hesitate in behaving like a small man, if this was necessary for grabbing Kashmir. This incontrovertible evidence is contained in Sardar Patel's Correspondence 1945-50, Vol 1, 'New Light on Kashmir' edited by Durga Das and published by Nava Jivan Publishing House, Ahmadabad, India in 1971. The correspondence shows how the Indian leaders had long been plotting to bag Kashmir; in fact, the tribal incursion was avidly pressed into service as a good excuse for throwing in the military might of India to crush the desire of the overwhelming majority of the Kashmir population to accede to Pakistan. There is no doubt that even if the tribal incursion had not taken place, the spreading revolt of the Muslims against Maharaja's unmistakable intentions to join India, would have been dubbed 'Pakistan's armed interference' to justify fraudulent accession and military occupation of Kashmir by India.

The first letter reproduced below is from Sardar Patel, the implacable enemy of Pakistan and the strong man of the Congress, to the Maharaja. He was at the relevant time Minister for States in the undivided Indian Government. The letter was written after Mountbatten's unsuccessful visit to Kashmir and before Gandhi's successful one.

I fully appreciate the difficult and delicate situation in which your State has been placed, but as a sincere friend and well-wisher of

the State, I wish to assure you that the interests of Kashmir lie in joining the Indian Union and its Constituent Assembly without any delay. Its past history and tradition demand it, and all India looks up to you and expects you to take the decision. Eighty per cent of India is on this side.

"I was greatly disappointed when his excellency the Viceroy returned without having a full and frank discussion with you. May I take the liberty of suggesting that it would be better if you even now come to Delhi, when you will certainly be his (Viceroy's) guest? We want an opportunity of having a frank and free discussion with you in an atmosphere of freedom, and I have no doubts that all your doubts and suspicions, of which I have heard from Gopaldas, will completely disappear. You must make friends with the leaders of Free India who want to be friends with you."

Meanwhile, India had become free. Gandhi had, in his August visit brought the Maharaja round. The Maharaja was now biding time to declare accession to India. Kak, who as Prime Minister, opposed this, had been dismissed. Batra, a trusted agent of Patel, was now all in all in Kashmir as Deputy Prime Minister. Patel who was now the Home Minister as well as Deputy Prime Minister of India wrote to Sardar Baldev Singh, the then Defence Minister, the following letter on 13th September:-

"I have received a request from the Kashmir Darbar to arrange for the loans of services of Lt. Col. Kashmira Singh Katoch for service as C-in-C of Kashmir forces vice Major-General Scott who is returning. You know the difficulties of the State, and I feel it would be useful to have an officer of our own army as Commander-in-Chief of the Kashmir Forces".

Shocked, stunned and then galvanised into action, the Muslims of Poonch, battle-tired veterans of the Second World War, had erupted into an armed revolt in response to the reign of repression and terror unleashed by the Maharaja's troops. Against the backdrop of Ran Lal Bhatia's appointment, India took no chances. Justice Mehar Chand was appointed to fill the top slot of Kashmir's Prime Minister on 21st September. He was a Punjabi Hindu, known for his animosity for Muslims. He had been the Hindu nominee on the Boundary Commission, headed by Radcliffe. Patel congratulated the Maharaja on this appointment and went on to say:

"Justice Mehar Chand Mahajan has discussed with me about the immediate requirements of the State and I have promised him full support and co-operation on our behalf. We realise fully how difficult the situation there is, and I assure your Highness that we will do our best to help your State in this critical period. Justice Mehar Chand Mahajan will convey to you personally the gist of our conversation on all matters about the interests of Kashmir. I have also written a letter to Mr. Batra today on matters on which he had sought our

assistance. The gist of conversation to be conveyed personally was not fit for being put into writing”.

Obviously it pertained to the contemplated large-scale killing of Muslims, as in Kapurthalla, to solve the Muslim majority problem. Mahajan, it is pertinent to point out, was appointed for a 5-year tenure. Abdullāh, even if released, had no chance for heading the government in Kashmir. He was obviously not the proper choice for presiding over the liquidation of Kashmiri Muslims. That is why Mahajan continued officially to be the Prime Minister of Kashmir till March, 1948, when Sheikh Abdullāh's induction into corridors of powers became unavoidable because of the spreading and successful Poonch revolt and incursion from the Frontier province of Pakistan. Abdullāh was initially made Chief Emergency Administrator to provide a Muslim facade for an anti-Muslim operation. He was made Prime Minister after five months to hoodwink world opinion as the Kashmir issue was being debated by the Security Council of the United Nations.

The valiant struggle of Poonchi Muslims for freedom, with practically no arms, no ammunition and no money, a struggle waged with a very limited number of countrymade rifles, axes, spears, domestic knives and even sticks against Dogra troops equipped with modern weapons and all the resources of a regular government, was making the coterie of conspirators in Delhi very jittery. Prime Minister Nehru's letter dated 27th September to Patel, his Deputy and Home Minister shows how they wanted to use Abdullāh like a toilet paper to discard him when no longer needed.

“The approach of winter is going to cut Kashmir from the rest of India ... Therefore, it is necessary that something should be done before winter conditions set in. This means practically by the end of October, or at the latest, by the beginning of November ... I doubt if the Maharaja and his State forces can meet the situation by themselves and without some popular help, they will be isolated from the rest of India and if their own people go against them, it will be very difficult to meet the situation. Obviously, the only major group that can side with them is the National Conference under Sheikh Abdullāh's leadership. If by chance that is hostile or even passive then the Maharaja and his government become isolated and the Pakistani people will have a relatively free field.

“It becomes important, therefore, that the Maharaja should make friends with the National Conference so that there might be this popular support against Pakistan. Indeed, it seems to me that there is no other course open to the Maharaja but to release Sheikh Abdullāh and the National Conference leaders, to make a friendly approach to them, seek their co-operation and make them feel that this is really meant and then to declare adhesion to the Indian Union. Once the State has acceded to India, it will become very difficult for Pakistan to

invade it officially or unofficially without coming into conflict with the Indian Union. If, however there is delay in this accession, then Pakistan will go ahead without much fear of consequences specially when the winter isolates Kashmir.

"I would again add that time is the essence of the business and things must be done in a way so as to bring about the accession of Kashmir to the Indian Union as rapidly as possible with the cooperation of Sheikh Abdullah".

Was it surprising, in the light of this letter, that only two days later, on 29th September, Abdullah was released? That the Kashmir Government was fully in collusion with Delhi for getting military hardware to suppress the freedom fighters in Poonch is proved by the letter dated 1st October, written by the Maharaja's government to Patel, the Deputy Prime Minister of India, thanking the latter for his kind help in procuring for the State on loan the requisite wireless equipment for making Srinagar and Jammu landings well-equipped for all-weather air service.

The letter referred to one Mr. Ahuja, an emissary of Patel, and said:

"Mr. Ahuja has very kindly suggested that for purposes of secrecy of certain administrative messages which may be sent from here to you or others at New Delhi, it would be advisable to use a special code. This is an excellent suggestion and I trust the authorities concerned would agree to this. "A seperate self contained letter is being sent to the Defence Minister for supply of arms and ammunition." On 2nd October, Patel consoled the Maharaja as follows:

"I am expediting as much as possible the linking up of the State with the Indian Dominion by means of telegraph, wireless and roads. We fully realise the need for despatch and urgency, and I can assure that we shall do our best."

The Kashmir Government had signed a standstill Agreement with Pakistan on 12th August for the continuation of these very services i.e. post, telegraph and telephones in particular, but without any formal agreement with India, this secret honeymoon was on.

On 3rd October, Batra again wrote to Patel:

"An indent for military equipment was sent to you on 1st October, and another letter connected therewith is being sent today. I trust this would receive your earliest attention.

"I am writing this to say that Mr. Justice Mahajan after meeting you at Delhi conveyed the hope that it could be possible for the Indian dominion to concentrate some military forces at Madhopur (just near the State border) or at an equally near and convenient centre for rendering this state succour in case it is needed."

One 7th October, Patel wrote to Baldev Singh, India's Defence Minister:

"I hope arrangements are in train to send immediately supplies

of arms and ammunition to Kashmir State. If necessary, we must arrange to send them by air”.

The campaign of ruthless repression was producing a fierce and angry backlash from the war-veterans of Poonch. Hence, on 17th October, Batra wrote to Patel:

“Operations going on in Poonch necessitate immediate equipment of our forces with full complement of arms and ammunition. I have therefore requested Hon’ble Defence Minister to arrange release of stocks from Delhi immediately, and if some have to be obtained from other places, then these may also be sent immediately, **by air direct without transshipment** from Delhi.”

How strange, and how cheeky on the part of Indian leaders and apologists to say that they were busy with other important things when Pakistan forced Maharaja’s hands to seek accession to India by engineering the tribal incursion!

The object of grabbing Kashmir was to encircle Pakistan militarily and strangle it economically. India would have, through Gilgit, a common border with Afghanistan, then openly hostile to Pakistan and the only country in the world which opposed Pakistan’s admission as member of the U.N. Pakistan would get sandwiched; and with the active support of India and Afghanistan, the Pukhtoonistan stunt backed by the Frontier Gandhi, Abdul Ghaffar Khan, would be used for military intervention. Pakistan could thus be crushed by a pincer movement of Indian and Afghan troops. The Grand Trunk Road, the most vital road-link between Karachi and Peshawar, would be particularly vulnerable from Gujrat to Gujar Khan. The towns of Gujrat, Kharian, Jhelum, Dina, Gujar Khan and Kahute would be within 8 to 10 miles of gun-range from the Kashmir border, and Rawalpindi and Peshawar could be cut off from Lahore and Karachi within a few hours. Furthermore Hazara, Abbottabad, Mansehra, Murree would be perilously close to a hostile India. With Kashmir in her pocket, the three life-giving rivers of Pakistan i.e. Indus, Jhelum and Chenab under her control and then Mangla headworks in her possession, by all laws of economics and logistics, Pakistan would fall like a ripe plum into India’s lap. In fact, in spite of the Indus Basin Treaty between India and Pakistan in early sixties, India constructed Sallal Dam on Chenab and started work on Wullar Barrage on the Jhelum before she was overtaken by the current freedom-fight in 1989. Securing Kashmir’s accession was the most important plank in India’s plan of finishing Pakistan during her other teething troubles, such as influx of millions of refugees, unprecedented in human history, setting up a governmental structure from a scratch, financial difficulties, compounded by India’s withholding Rs. 55 crore, Pakistan’s share, on partition.

This then was the political scenario against the backdrop of Indian intentions as reflected in the resolution of the Congress on 5th June, 1947:-

“Geography and mountains and the sea fashioned India as she is, and no human agency can change that shape or come in the way of her final destiny. The AICC earnestly trusts that when present passions have subsided, India’s problems will be viewed in their correct perspective and the false doctrine of two nations will be discredited and discarded by all.” 18

NOTES

1. **Jyoti Bhushan Das Gupta**, *Indo-Pakistan Relations*, Amsterdam, Djambatan, 1958, p. 150.
2. **Campbell Johnson**, *Mission with Mountbatten*, London, Robert Hale Ltd, 1951, p. 120; and **V.P. Menon**, *The story of Integration of Indian States*, Calcutta, Orient Longman, 1956, p. 394.
3. **Payara Lal**, *Mahatma*, Vol II, pp. 357-58
4. **Ian Stephens**, *Pakistan*, London, Ernest Bena, 1964, p. 220.
5. **Mehar Chand Mahajan**, *Looking Back*, London Cassel, pp. 150-88.
6. *Ibid*
7. **Campbell Johnson**, *Mission with Mountbatten*, p. 56.
8. **General B. M. Kaul**, *The Untold Story*, Delhi, Allied Publishers, 1967, pp. 86-87.
9. **Leonard Mosley**, *The Last Days of the British Raj*, London, Werdenfield and Nicolson, 1964, p. 153.
10. **Michael Edwards**, *The Last Days of the British India*, London, Cassel, 1963, p. 174.
11. *The Partition of India*, edited by **C.H. Philips** and **Mary Doreen Wainright**, George Allen and Unwin, p. 531.
12. **Lord Birdwood**, *A continent Decides*, New York, Praeger, 1954, p. 74.
13. **Mohammad Ali**, *The Emergence of Pakistan*, New York and London, Columbia University Press, 1967, p. 218.
14. **Mosley** (see No. 9 above), pp. 220 and 227.
15. *Partition Papers*, Vol VI, pp. 303-4.
16. **Campbell Johnson**, as in 7 above, p. 153.
17. *Ibid*, pp. 151-52.
18. *The Indian Annual Register*, 1947, Vol. I, pp.122-3.

Chapter 3

Evolution of the Freedom-Fight

The period of 43 years, following the fraudulent accession to India in 1947 can be broadly divided into the following five periods:-

1. 1947-53. This span of six years was a period of support for India by a few select segments of population, but overwhelmingly the Muslims were against India. However, this opposition was mostly muted.
2. 1953-75. During these 22 years, the Kashmiri Muslims' support, if any for India, had completely eroded. But repeated frustrations had plunged them into a mood of deep despondency.
3. 1975-82. During these seven years, opposition to India became articulate.
4. 1983-87. During this period, political opposition to India became active, and Indian occupation was openly challenged.
5. 1987-91. During this period, an armed opposition to India started. The stray acts of armed insurgency snowballed into a full-fledged freedom-fight by guerrilla groups.

The period of muted opposition.

This period coincided with Sheikh Abdullah's accession to

power in 1947. In the elections to the Kashmir Assembly held in January, 1947, Muslim Conference, which was like the Muslim League in British India, captured 16 out of 21 Muslim seats. So it was the most representative body of Kashmiri Muslims. In fact, in the word Pakistan, an acronym, the letter K stands for Kashmir just as P stands for Punjab and S for Sind.

Anyhow Sheikh Abdullah had been promised complete autonomy in 1947 by Pandit Nehru. But when it came to constitution-making, which was underway in Delhi, the Indian legislators were opposed to any such provision for Kashmir in the Indian constitution, which would guarantee non-interference in her internal affairs. The Indian legislators were for treating her the same way as the other about 500 princely states which had either been merged with neighbouring provinces or converted into new provinces in the Indian Republic. Abdullah desired that the relevant provision in the Indian constitution should be reflective of the promises made to him. He also wanted the convening of a Constituent Assembly in Kashmir to frame Kashmir's constitution. This required the prior approval of the Indian Congress Parliamentary Party. Now, let us quote from an Indian author to have some idea of the great chasm that existed between Abdullah's rosy dreams and the stark reality, which was symbolised by the Indian law-makers.

"In the Party there was a strong body of opinion which looked askance at any suggestion of discrimination between the J & K state and other states as members of the future Indian Union and was not prepared to go beyond certain limits in providing for the special position of Jammu and Kashmir. Sardar Patel was himself fully in accord with this opinion ... In fact, he had not taken any part in framing the draft proposals with the result he heard them only when Gopalaswamy Iyyengar found himself a lone defender, with Maulana Azad an ineffective supporter. Metaphorically, the situation may be described by saying that Iyyengar and his proposals were torn to pieces by the Party". 1

Iyyengar, a Minister in the Indian Cabinet, had been assigned the task of getting the proposals through in the Party by Premier Nehru who was in USA. The Indian author goes on to say:

"The opinion in opposition to Iyyengar's formula was forcefully and even militarily expressed and the issue even brought in the sovereignty of the Constituent Assembly to draw up the constitution without being tied to the apron-strings of the Kashmir Constituent Assembly. In such situation, even Maulana Azad was shouted down. It was left to Sardar Patel to bring the discussion down to a practical plane and to plead that because of international complications, a provisional approach could be made. Finally, his view prevailed and Gopalaswamy's draft with necessary modifications was passed. A last-minute plea of Maulana Azad to endorse Sheikh Abdullah's point of view was turned down summarily and the Constituent

Assembly without much debate, and with the non-participation of Sheikh Abdullah, adopted the article which later figures as article 370. 2

Facing a barrage of criticism for having enacted article 370, Nehru said, "After all, neither 370 nor Sheikh Abdullah were permanent. The future would depend on the strength and guts of the Indian Government and if we cannot have confidence in our strength, we do not deserve to exist as a nation."

Abdullah was unhappy about Indian authorities at Delhi interfering in matters other than Defence, Foreign Affairs and Communications. He wrote to Nehru who dodged the issue in his following reply:

"Relations with Kashmir were being conducted by India not on a formal footing, but on the basis of common objectives and friendship, I have never taken any action in Kashmir without consulting you" Put in simple words, this was like saying, 'You lose where you lose, but you also lose where you win'. Abdullah started getting disillusioned and depressed.

Meanwhile, the economic consequences of accession were proving disastrous. The Kashmir Valley is walled in on all the four sides by very high snow-covered mountains, the only natural opening being the road from Srinagar to Rawalpindi in Pakistan. A sizeable part of this road was under Pakistani control; hence the channels of trade, travel and cultural contact were closed. Kashmir was accessible to India only through the Srinagar-Jammu road which passed through a tunnel, 9000 feet high, called Banihal Pass. This tunnel remained mostly closed during winter due to heavy snowfall. Although another tunnel, called Jawaharlal tunnel, has been constructed 2000 feet below, the problem has not lent itself to solution. The Valley gets bottled up in winter, causing untold suffering and shortages of essential commodities. One of the principal sources of revenue to government and income to the inhabitants was timber, carried down to the Pakistani Punjab through the Jhelum and Chenab rivers. This was no longer possible. Fruit, previously marketed in Pakistan, had now to be transported to Delhi or East Punjab either by air, which was very costly or by road, so long and mountainous, that half the fruit was damaged enroute. The tourist trade in which much of the Kashmiri handicrafts were patronised by British officers and foreigners, visiting Kashmir in summer, was in bad shape, partly because of the departure of British Officers from India in consequence of transfer of power, and partly because the turmoil, following partition, had not yet fully settled down. Moreover, those affluent people who visited Kashmir in summer from what had become West Pakistan could no longer do so. The affluent Hindu from India believed in amassing money to save it, as against his Muslim counterpart who believed in amassing money to spend it. Thus all those segments of society which depended on

trourist trade such as house-boat owners, boatmen, cab men and artisans suffered economic distress.

In fact, in the first winter of 47-48, after accession when there was talk of plebiscite in Kashmir, even some staunch supporters of accession to India, were having second thoughts. One of them jokingly said, "Our cattle have decided for Pakistan, because they do not even touch the powder-salt of India and run after the rock-salt of Pakistan to which they are accustomed."

The bitter disappointment with the Hindu leadership in general and the Hindu press in the particular, the campaign of calumny started by the Jammu Hindus and the widespread economic distress in Kashmir, compelled Abdullah to regard the issue of accession open, instead of being closed, as he himself had been saying in the euphoria of political honeymoon with India. He made a fiery speech in Rnbir Singh Pur, a small town, near Jammu-Pakistan border on 10th April, 1952, nearly five years after accession to India. In this speech he condemned India in general and the Indian press in particular. This speech created great resentment in India because truth is usually unpalatable.

The bad faith of Nehru in giving a special status to Kashmir, which fell far too short of Abdullah's expectations, is proved by the following quotation of B.N. Mulik, Chief Security Advisor of Premier Nehru.

"The Prime Minister asked me to go to Jammu on a dual mission and try to persuade the Praja Parishad to call off their agitation by explaining that Kashmir was already an integral part of India. However, as the matter was under the consideration of the UN Security Council, a separate status for Kashmir had to be maintained for some more years. These special privileges would gradually disappear and Kashmir would be like any other state of India. It would be wise for the Hindus of Jammu to be patient for a little longer and assist in the natural process of integration." 5

Abdullah was getting bitter with every passing day. Addressing a public meeting in Srinagar on 10th July, 1953, he openly proclaimed that Kashmir should become independent. He further said that justice had not been done to the Muslim majority in Kashmir and he himself was not trusted. 6

The Government of India could take it no longer. Hence on the trumped-up charge of being in contact with Pakistan, Sheikh Abdullah was served with the order of dismissal at Gulmarg on the 8th August, 1953 and arrested the same evening. 7

Only six years back, the city of Srinagar was full of Pakistani flags on 14th August, 1947 when Pakistan came into existence, showing the large-scale support-base for her. But Abdullah on coming to power, got rid of educated pro-Pakistan Kashmiris by arranging special convoys which off-loaded them at the Suchet garh border in Pakistan. Those who were politically troublesome, were

sorted out by a generous recourse to Enemy Agents Act and Defence Rules of India. Even so, people usually managed to smuggle a written memorandum in favour of plebiscite to a UN observer, shopping for Kashmiri handicrafts in Srinagar. But there were no political processions and meetings in favour of Pakistan during 1947-53, although there was mounting dismay at India's resistance to allow a free plebiscite under UN auspices.

Nevertheless, Abdullah's dismissal and subsequent detention eroded whatever support the National Conference provided to India. But for a selected quislings who had sold their souls, the entire Muslim population, even some Kashmiri Pandits, became vehemently anti-India. After Abdullah's arrest, his followers organised a Plebiscite Front, as the opportunists in the National Conference had elected Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad, Abdullah's successor-in-Office, as party president. There were violent and widespread riots to protest against Abdullah's disgrace, deposition and detention. Scores of people died and hundreds got wounded as a result of police firings. But, as a whole, this span of six years from 1947 to 1953 was one of muted opposition to India.

Period of Deep Despondency (1953-75).

From 1953 to 1963, Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad was the Prime Minister of Kashmir. He did all that Sh. Abdullah refused to do. Article 370 of the Indian Constitution required ratification of the Kashmir Constituent Assembly which was convened in November, 1951. Sheikh Abdullah was of the view that ratification would open the flood gates of interference by India in matters other than Foreign Affairs, Defence and Communications. But Bakshi obliged his bosses and got article 370 ratified. The result was that the separate flag and separate national anthem of Kashmir were discarded. The Indian Supreme Court and the Election Commission had now jurisdiction in Kashmir. The All India Radio, the Chief Controller of Imports and Exports, the Income Tax, Land Customs, the Intelligence Bureau and all other central departments opened offices and started functioning in Kashmir. The elections to the State Assembly in 1951 were neither fair nor impartial because all the candidates of National Conference were returned unopposed.

Though Bakshi succeeded Sheikh Abdullah as President of the National Conference, he lost whatever mass support his predecessor had. His strength came now from the big beneficiaries of his regime and hard-boiled Communists like G.M. Sadiq, Mir Qasim and D.P. Dhar.

Knowing that the result of a free and fair plebiscite would be against her, India had started harping on the tune that the only way of

solving the Kashmir problem was to have direct talks. Taking his cue from this, the new Prime Minister of Pakistan Mohammad Ali Bogra went to Delhi on Nehru's invitation in 1953 while the Kashmir cauldron was boiling as a result of Sh. Abdullah's arrest. It was decided by Bogra and Nehru that a new Plebiscite Administrator from a neutral and small country, instead of Admiral Chester Nimitz, a nominee of the U.N. Secretary General, would be appointed by April, 1954. Subsequent backtracking of Nehru on this commitment showed that it had been made with the prime object of cooling the anger of Kashmiri people and distracting world attention from Abdullah's arrest. When the six-month time-limit fixed in the joint declaration was about to expire, Nehru said India was no longer bound by her promise as Pakistan had brought Cold War to the doorsteps of India by joining SEATO (South-east Asia Treaty Organisation) and Baghdad Pact, both of which were cobbled by USA.

The second elections to the rubber-stamp Kashmir Assembly were held in 1956 with Bakshi at the helm of affairs. As in 1951, most of the National Conference candidates were returned unopposed, because the state apparatus was recklessly used to rig the elections. Meanwhile, the Soviet dictator, Stalin, had been succeeded by Khrushchev on the former's death. Professing neutrality in the Cold War, India befriended Soviet Union which, as a permanent member of the Security Council, vetoed subsequently every resolution aimed at holding a plebiscite in Kashmir. In fact, Khrushchev, accompanied by Marshal Bulganin, visited Srinagar during his tour of India in 1956, and proclaimed Kashmir to be an integral part of India, a statement most pleasing to the Indian Government.

Another depressing development for Kashmiris was the declaration of Martial Law in Pakistan in 1958 which provided an opportunity to their opponents to indulge in cheap jibes. Be that as it may, Bakshi was ruthless in suppressing political opposition, though he provided some sops to Kashmiri Muslims by improving their induction into state services and ordering their admission to medical and engineering colleges in large numbers. For the rest he was interested in making hay while the sun of Indian patronage shone. In fact, he told a deputation of Muslims, who considered accession to India injurious to posterity, "Kashmir will not become Pakistan because you want it. It will not remain India because I want it. To be sure, Kashmir is trapped in the quicksand of Cold War. The best thing for you and me is to get money from India and enjoy life." The Indians had meanwhile changed their stance. There was no dispute about Kashmir, they said, as it was an integral part of India.

In 1962 a Sino-Indian conflict erupted in NEFA (North-East Frontier Area) of India. It was precipitated by Nehru's arrogant orders to throw out the Chinese from what he considered Indian

territory. The conflict resulted in the rout of Indian troops and great personal humiliation to Nehru. But while it was on, the West started dripping with profusion of sympathy and support for India. The governments of U.S.A. and Britain were particularly apprehensive, and rightly so, that Pakistan might take advantage of the Indian predicament to seek a military solution of Kashmir. They therefore persuaded President Ayub Khan to use the good offices of one senior American diplomat, Averell Harriman and British Commonwealth Secretary, Duncan Sandys, to start talks for resolving the Kashmir tangle. Meanwhile India was given green light for pulling out her troops from Kashmir and deploy them against China. The proposal of talks was a clever trick to keep Pakistan inactive while India was vulnerable. Bhutto and Swarn Singh, Foreign Ministers of Pakistan and India respectively held a series of meetings over a period of six months, but could not reach agreement. Nevertheless, the talks had served their purpose.

In the winter of 1963, the Holy Relic in the shrine at Hazrat Bal was stolen. This event threw a terrible pall of grief over the Muslims of Kashmir. There was widespread unrest in the Valley and millions assembled in Srinagar to give vent to their grief and anger. All shops, all offices, all business came to a standstill. In reality, the anger and protests were an expression of pent-up feelings of political frustration. It was an incredible scenario, hundreds of thousands of people, men and women, from all over the Valley, villages, small and big, all towns in the periphery gathered together in Srinagar, in snow and bitter cold, protesting for days together, eating what little they could from community kitchens, improvised in the open by voluntary contribution of cash and kind and having hardly any sleep in what was too little accommodation for too many people. The crisis was so grave that Nehru had to send his emissary, Lal Bahadur Shastri (who succeeded him as Prime Minister of India) to assuage the grief of the people. A widespread suspicion was that Bakshi, who had to step down from Prime Ministership under the Kamraj Plan, was instrumental in having the relic stolen. The object was, so the critics said, to demonstrate that only he, as occupant of the top slot in Kashmir, could keep things smooth and easy. The people of Kashmir were already in the grip of despair because India now had the check to deny the very existence of the dispute. Her Soviet friends were patting her on the back, but Pakistan's Anglo-American friends were stabbing her in the back. In May, 1964, Sh. Abdullah after 11 years of detention in jail came to Pakistan to sell a proposal of confederation of India, Pakistan and Kashmir to Ayub Khan. This plan aborted due to Nehru's sudden demise while Abdullah was still in Pakistan. The little glimmer of hope that the Kashmiris saw in Abdullah's mission disappeared, heightening their dejection and deepening their frustration.

In 1965, G.M. Sadiq who replaced Shamas Din as Prime Minister set up a branch of All India Congress in Kashmir of which he became President. The National Conference was practically dead: almost the entire rank and file had joined the Plebiscite Front which Sh. Abdullah and his friend and follower, Mirza Afzal Beg, had founded. This amounted to almost an about-face in politics because in 1947-49 both these stalwarts stood for the finality of accession to India.

In 1965, some ambitious high-ups in the Pakistan government, induced President Ayub Khan to launch what is known as 'Operation Gibraltar' in Kashmir. He was told that this operation would improve his sagging popularity, a result of the rigging of presidential elections in which Miss Fatima Jinnah had lost. It appears in hindsight that the operation was deliberately mis-planned to topple or weaken Ayub Khan. Anyhow the operation turned out to be an unmitigated disaster, because it degenerated into an Indo-Pakistan War. Unspeakable atrocities were committed by Indian troops on those Kashmiris who had collaborated with the so-called infiltrators. The result was that about sixty thousand Muslims had to flee from Poonch and Rajori districts of Indian-occupied Kashmir to the Pakistani side as refugees. The UN Security Council arranged a Cease-fire on 23rd September. Eventually, Premier Kosygin of Soviet Union invited President Ayub Khan and Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri to meet in Tashkent. Kosygin cobbled an agreement on the 10th January, 1966, known as the Tashkent Declaration, which was so much in favour of India that Shastri is considered to have died of heart failure, brought about by excessive joy. The war had only one redeeming feature: it demonstrated Pakistan's resolve and capacity to stem the tide of aggression of an enemy, superior in number, resources and equipment. The Tashkent Declaration caused great disappointment to Kashmiris and was a great emotional set-back. It was the result of US-Soviet collusion against Pakistan, which had incurred the displeasure of Soviets and President Johnson of US for being friendly to China.

Another traumatic experience for Kashmiri Muslims was the fall of Dhaka on 16th December, 1971 and the breakaway of former East Pakistan which emerged as independent Bangla Desh. Mrs. Indra Gandhi, the Indian Prime Minister crowed: "The Two-Nation theory has been drowned in the Bay of Bengal." She also said: 'We have avenged one thousand years' slavery.' If East Pakistan could not be retained, how can Pakistan hope to get Kashmir? People forget that India and both the superpowers wanted to dismember Pakistan and they worked for it. Bengalis were misled. People of Bangladesh realised in less than a year that India was no friend of theirs. After the fall of Dhaka, Indian bands of marauders relieved poor Bangladeshis of their costly belongings, dismantled even factories and trucked them in pieces to Calcutta. India has since kept Bangladesh in a state

of uncertainty by not solving the Farrukha Barrage issue and by refusing to restore Berubari enclave to Bangladesh. There were the circumstances which created a backlash in that country, culminating in the assassination of Sheikh Mujib-ur-Rehman, the architect of Bangladesh.

Anyhow, the signing of the Simla Agreement in 1972 by Bhutto and Indira, as Prime Ministers of Pakistan and India, was another blow to the confidence of Kashmiris. It showed that Pakistan had agreed to change the name of 'Cease Fire Line' into 'Line of Control' which appeared just one step short of making it a permanent international boundary. It was against this distressing background that Sheikh Abdullah, who had again been arrested after Nehru's death on the Charge of conspiring with China against Indian interests, was released and later persuaded to strike a political deal with Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. The agreement, known as Delhi Accord, was signed by the two in 1975 and Abdullah installed as Chief Minister of Kashmir. Syed Mir Qasim, the incumbent C.M, stepped down from the Congress hobby-horse, to make room for Sheikh Abdullah who revived the National Conference and dissolved the Plebiscite Front founded in 1953, after his arrest and detention. Thus, this period of 22 years was full of frustrations for the people of Kashmir. Except for stray acts of individual defiance. This was a period of muted opposition to India.

Articulate Opposition (1975-83)

The near-demise of democracy in India following the declaration of emergency in 1975 by Premier Indra Gandhi, the rift in the Congress Party into pro and anti-Indira factions, the rapid political rehabilitation of Pakistan after the East Pakistan debacle, the passage of a unanimous Pakistani constitution, after hosting the Second Summit of Islamic Heads of State in Lahore in 1974, all contributed to a resurgence of hope amongst the Kashmiri people to be able to ultimately throw off the Indian yoke.

Economic Problems

A stock-taking of the effects of three decades old Indian bondage got underway. It was realised that Indian authorities had tried to cripple the economy of Kashmir. Apples were the most well-known and coveted fruit of Kashmir. The 'anbari' apple was the king of all apples. As symbolised by its name, the fragrance of this

particular variety was fascinating. In colour, it was most pleasing; and in taste, simply delicious. In the guise of introducing a better variety, said to give about four times the yield, a poor variety supplanted the king variety. The new apple was much smaller in size, nothing unusual in the matter of colour, in fact drab in looks. In taste and texture, it was simply a despair. Thus the Kashmiri apple had been robbed of its competitiveness. The present writer visited the Valley in the early eighties and was shocked to see the complete elimination of 'anbari' and the omnipresence of its poor substitute. What is worse, a chemical was introduced and sprayed on apple trees with the ostensible object of fighting apple diseases. Over a period of time, it has destroyed entire gardens by making them progressively unproductive. The 'anbari' variety was introduced in the Simla and Kullu Valleys of India, making that fruit attractive as well as competitive as these valleys are much nearer the areas of consumption. The new Kashmiri apple, poor as it is, is purchased by whole-sale Hindu fruit-merchants of Delhi who fly to Srinagar to negotiate the purchase of the entire crop of a number of gardens at rock-bottom prices by forming cartels. Apricots and peaches do not last long and cannot be transported over a hilly and tortuous road over a distance of 500 Kilometers to towns in East Punjab and Delhi. What is more, the road from Banihal to Jammu gets frequently blocked due to landslides as a result of the rapid depletion of forest trees and erosion of vegetative cover, resulting from overgrazing. Thus the fruit industry, one of the pillars of Kashmir economy, stands ruined, meaning hardship and misery for tens of thousands of Kashmiria.

Kashmir used to be self-sufficient, in fact, surplus in mutton, poultry and vegetables. This is a thing of the past. Thousands of sheep from Rajasthan, poultry and vegetable from East Punjab are now imported out of sheer necessity.

The extraction of timber from forests in a scientific manner provided livelihood to lacs of people in various parts of the state. The Indian army has destroyed many of these forests for construction of bunkers, bridges and roads. The greatest damage is occasioned by use of timber as fuel by the military, sprawled in various places, very often in hilly areas. Cold conditions in the area also necessitate use of wood for warming up army Jawans. In addition to this, any timber extracted cannot be flown down the rivers Chenab and Jhelum, to the natural Pakistani market, as it used to be before 1947. This timber has now to be transported by road on trucks over long distances which decreases its competitiveness in Indian markets. The forest lessees used to employ thousands of labourers for falling standing trees, sawing them into logs and sleepers, sending down by sloping iron-ropes to the nearest stream or river for being launched downstream by the current. During its floatation downstream, stranded logs or

sleepers were launched again into the current by labour employed for this purpose. A good deal of the potential for absorption of labour has been lost because of the depleted forest wealth resulting, inter alia, from defence needs and also the necessity of transportation by road.

Kashmir specialised in handicrafts such as walnutwood carving, papier machie, namda and school-making. A lot of imitation industries have been set up in East Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana and Delhi, reducing demand for genuine Kashmiri handicrafts as many imitation products are palmed off as 'Made in Kashmir'

Most of the industries, medium-size or bigish-sized have been set up in the predominantly Hindu-majority areas of Jammu from Kathua upto Uthampur. Except for those dating back to pre-1947 period, hardly any cottage industries worth the name have been set-up in the Kashmir Valley or the Muslim majority districts on the outer periphery of the Valley. During winter months when farming was not possible because of snow, the Kashmiri peasant used to go for seasonal labour to the present-day Pakistani Punjab. This option is no longer available. He cannot go to Indian provinces, firstly, because the road gets closed in winter and secondly, because he feels insecure on account of frequent anti-Muslim riots in India. Lately, the turmoil in Indian Punjab has made a visit to or through that state very risky.

As pointed out earlier, avenues of employment even in the civil departments under the control of the Central Government are practically closed. In Srinagar, there were over 75 managers of various commercial, industrial and agricultural banks with their principal offices in Delhi and other cities of India. Not one of them was a Kashmiri Muslim although quite a few were Kashmiri Pundits.

According to the census of 1971, conducted by the Government of India, Muslims in occupied Kashmir constituted 67% of population i.e. a little more than two-thirds. And yet in the gazetted cadre, their representation was about 33% and in the non-gazetted about 50% - a deplorable state of affairs in the only Muslim majority state of the Indian Union.

Educational Decline

The level of literacy amongst Muslims registered decrease instead of increase in the whole of Kashmir and in the Hindu-dominated areas of Jammu province. According to the census of 1981, in the predominantly Hindu majority districts of Jammu the percentage of literacy was 42% while in the predominantly Muslim majority district of Anantnag (Islamabad), it was 22%. This low percentage is ascribable to two factors. Firstly, there is not much

incentive for the Muslim parents of rural areas, who constitute 70% of the population, to send even their boys to schools, to say nothing of the girls. The non-Muslims have even now major control over the gazetted cadres and higher echelons of bureaucracy. This affects adversely the induction of Muslims even in lower clerical levels. Secondly, the number of educational institutions, both public and private, is less on per capita basis in Muslim areas than in the Hindu ones. Apart from greater say in governmental affairs, the Hindus of Jammu are more prosperous because of their large-scale representation in Indian defence services and greater industrialisation of their area. Both these advantages are denied to Muslim areas the first in its entirety and the second to a very large extent. The Muslim peasant prefers apprenticeship in a carpet-making cottage industry for his son to admission in a state-run school where he is likely to be cut off from his Islamic moorings because of the deliberately designed curriculum and the heavy doze of Hindi, Sanskrit and Hindu culture in the prescribed text-books. As for girls, the Muslim father in the village would much rather opt for her ability to read the Quran than master the tree R's. On top of all this, the chances of admission to technical institutions such as medical and engineering colleges and lower-level technical institutions such as medical and engineering colleges and lower-level technical institutes are not very bright for Muslim candidates for three reasons. The first is rampant corruption. In early 80's when the present writer visited Srinagar while Sh. Abdullah was the Chief Minister, a seat in a medical college was traded for one lac, that in an engineering college for seventy-five thousand and that in an Overseer's school for fifty thousand rupees. The Hindus with their relative prosperity were in a better position to get admission. Secondly, where merit, if at all, was the criterion, the non-Muslims with greater say and weight because of their numerical superiority in the gazetted ranks, were the bigger beneficiaries. Thirdly, even where no extraneous factor was at work, the average Kashmiri Muslim lagged behind his Kashmiri Pundit competitor because the Kashmiri Pundits have centuries-old traditions of intelligence, scholarship and high literacy. Naturally in view of all this, there are thousands of far far more unemployed Muslim youngmen in the State than non-Muslims, because the doors of employment in the private sector in the All-India services and the three arms of the Indian defence service, namely air force, navy and army are closed for them.

Cultural Onslaught

The Kashmiri Muslim started realising that he was the victim of

a cultural onslaught, rather patently ham-handed. Liquor shops were being opened and popularised to lure the youth. The use of opium, grass and even heroin was being encouraged by invisible hands to undermine the health and political will of the Muslim youth. Dramatic clubs were being opened in every important village, town and ward to attract youngmen to the fields of music and drama so that they stay away from any political activity, likely to weaken India's hold on Kashmir. Membership of these clubs rendered one more eligible for grant of state favours, including employment. The educational institutions prescribed a course, calculated to create an Indian outlook on life, rather than a Muslim or Kashmiri outlook. To achieve this object, apart from other steps, Srinagar was the third place after Delhi and Bombay where a T.V. Station was set up. Who does not know that the Doordarshan, as Indian TV is called, has been telecasting for years on end dramas like Ramayana and Mahabharata, seeped in Hindu history and culture and calculated to create a purely Hindu ethos? Grant-in-aid to many Muslim religious or semi-religious teaching institutions was stopped to promote the so-called secular ends of India. The result was that a number of such institutions had to be closed down. Any Muslim of either sex, marrying a Hindu of opposite sex, was rated a loyal Indian, washed clean of all doubts suspicions.

Acquisition of Property

Article 370 of the Indian Constitution, which fell far short of what S. Abdullah had been promised by Nehru before accession, afforded protection to local laws. Now as far back as 1929 A.D. on the combined demand of Dogra Sabha of Jammu and Yovak Sabha of Kashmir Pundits of Srinagar, the Maharaja of Kashmir had passed a law prohibiting non-Kashmiris from purchasing land in the State for agricultural or commercial purposes and from entering state service except with special permission. This law was designed to stop the heavy influx of the relatively more qualified Punjabis into state service and also impede expropriation of state-subjects from lands. But after accession of Kashmir to India, Hindus not belonging to the State found this law very inconvenient. However, there is a provision in this law for purchase or transfer of land for residential purposes upto 4 Kanals or 2420 square yards. To help themselves to commercial or agricultural, particularly commercial, property the device of acquiring land on a long lease of 99 years was found and pressed into service. This enabled some 2 lac non-Muslims in Jammu who had come as refugees in 1947 from what is now Pakistani Punjab to acquire land for residential, commercial purposes as owners or lessees. This strategem was used on a much bigger scale and lot of

Indian businessmen and capitalists started acquiring or expanding their interest in immovable property mostly in Srinagar and other urban areas of the Valley to which the present writer is a witness on the basis of what he saw and heard during his last visit to Srinagar in early 80's.

The Demographic Dishonesty

In 1947, the population of undivided Jammu & Kashmir was about 48 lacs of which about 38 lac were Muslims and the remaining 10 lac non-Muslims. In consequence of the massacre of Muslims in Jammu, about three lac Muslims sought refuge in Pakistan. The population of Azad Kashmir, Gilgit and Baltistan in Northern Areas, following the coming into effect of the Cease Fire on 1st January, 1949 was about 8 lacs. Thus the Muslim population left behind in Occupied Kashmir was about 27 lacs and the Hindus including non-state subject refugees about 12 lacs. According to the census of 1971, Muslim population in 10K was 67%. Although this percentage appears to be less than what it should be we may, for the sake of argument, assume it to be correct but the catch is: how did this percentage come down to 63% in 1981 census! No epidemic or migration, justifying the decline of 4% in Muslim population, took place during the decade 1971-81. How can we then rely on this figure which is diametrically opposed to the usually greater proliferation of Muslims in comparison with Hindus because of the cultural factors working in Muslim society? This decrease in population has no reasonable explanation, except deliberate under-enumeration of Muslims and over-enumeration of non-Muslims by a census staff, working under the Union Government, manned and supervised mostly by Hindus, as in all other civil departments in the State, whether local or central. In 1971, Muslim majority was 67% i.e. 2 Muslims for every one non-Muslim, in spite of including the non-Kashmiri Hindu refugees who really do not belong there. Thus the contours of a deliberate plan of dishonesty to deprive the Muslims of Kashmir of their democratic and demographic rights appeared to be all too clear. This coupled with the long-term leases of immovable property, permission to acquire land for residence, issue of false state-subject certificates also caused great agitation in Muslim minds.

Sh. Abdullah won the 1977 elections to the Kashmir Assembly by making two promises from his sick-bed when electioneering was on. One, he would open the Srinagar-Rawalpindi road for commercial and tourist traffic so that Kashmir Valley is relieved of its economic distress. Second, he would make it easier for divided Kashmiri families in Pakistan to meet and unite.

He was in fact trying to use the tremendous love of the Kashmiri Muslim for Pakistan to promote his own political ends. He had distanced himself from the State Congress which was headed by his two predecessors, Syed Mir Qasim and G.M. Sadiq and tried to exploit public sentiment for a purely regional political party i.e. The National Conference which was born, developed and confined to only the Jammu & Kashmir State. The pro-Pakistan sentiment was a reaction to the palpably unjust and discriminatory policies of the Indian Government. In fact, this sentiment was so intense that when Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was hanged by General Zia-ul-Haq in 1979, there were no protest processions in Pakistan, the place where Peoples' Party was in existence and had been in power for more than five years. If there were massive protests, they were in Kashmir where Muslims blamed the Indian Government for having played some clever trick to have Bhutto hanged, Bhutto who had given a successful call for a massive strike in both Pakistan and IOK. About 12 youngmen were killed and many more wounded by police firing on violent Muslim crowds in Kashmir. In fact, RAW, the Indian intelligence agency, used this opportunity to spread the impression that the Jamat-i-Islami in Pakistan was responsible for getting Bhutto hanged. The wrath of hot-headed Muslim youth was thus diverted towards the Jamat-i-Islami of Kashmir whose shops, property including houses and gardens, were burnt or destroyed, resulting in a loss of about 40 crores.

Abdullah's efforts to open the Srinagar-Rawalpindi road did not bear fruit. In fact, these promises were election stunts to catch votes. He got a bill passed to allow Kashmiris who had migrated to Pakistan in 1947 or after, to return to Kashmiri citizenship and enjoy all the usual legal rights. This bill never became law because the state Governor and the Central Government were vehemently opposed to it. On his death-bed on 23rd August, 1982, when Sh. Abdullah got his son, Dr. Farooq to be sworn in his cabinet as his heir apparent, he asked him to pursue the bill and have it passed.

Meanwhile, Indira Congress had suffered defeat in the general elections of 1977 at the hands of Janta Dal whose leader, Mararji Desai, emerged as the new Prime Minister of India. Indira Gandhi had become very unpopular due to her high-handed dealings and scandals like the Maruti car scandal in which her son, Sanjay, was involved. But after sometime in parliamentary opposition, she succeeded in toppling Mararji by backing up a dissident, Chaudhry Charan Singh. The result was that Charan Singh became Prime Minister for a short period till Indira pulled the political rug from under his feet. The fall of Charan Singh was followed by mid-term polls in which Indira staged a come-back as Prime Minister. But by wooing the Hindu vote and championing Hindu causes, she had widened the gulf between her and the Sikhs in the Punjab as well as the Muslims of Kashmir.

But political turmoil in India and continued neglect and deliberate injustice to Kashmiri Muslims had made the Muslim youth very vocal and openly supportive of Pakistan. If the Pakistani cricket team won a match against India, young Kashmiris would celebrate Pakistan's win by singing and dancing in streets, distributing sweetmeats, illuminating their houses in the evening, firing squibs, hoisting Pakistani flags and raising pro-Pakistan slogans.

The period of Active Opposition (1983-87) was the proverbial lull before storm. In view of its importance, it merits a seperate chapter which follows.

Notes

1. Dina Nath Rama, *Unhappy Kashmir - Hidden Story*, New Delhi, Reliance Publishing House, 1990, p. 131
2. Ibid, Page 132, para 1, line 8.
3. Ibid, p. 133.
4. Ibid, page 139, para 3, line 4.
5. Ibid, page 140
6. Ibid, page 154, para 2, line 6.
7. Ibid, page 160
8. The designations of Prime Minister and SadreRiyast were changed into those of Chief Minister and Governor during G.M. Sadiq's tenure. Through a legally questionable amendment in the J & K Constitution, India got these changes through. Instead of an elected Sadr-e-Riyast, the President of India got the power of appointing, changing or dismissing the State Governor.

Chapter 4

Opposition Becomes Active

The demise of Sh. Abdullah on September 8, 1982 marked the end of an era of about half a century during which his towering, if blundering, personality had cast long and lasting shadows over the political landscape of Kashmir. He had spent well about twenty years in jail. But of his two tormentors, the Maharaja and Nehru, the latter, rated a personal friend by Abdullah, had the dubious distinction of keeping him in prison for well over 10 years. Much as Abdullah loved power, pelf and Publicity, he tried during his first stint in power, to make life a little less hard for the average Kashmiri; he made tillers of land owners and wiped out rural indebtedness by legislation. Before his accord with Indian Premier Indira Gandhi in 1975 he headed a political party wedded to the resolution of Kashmir dispute through a plebiscite. During his election campaign in 1977 he stood for preservation of Kashmir's political identity. He did not enter into any electoral alliance with the Congress, much as Prime Minister Indira would have loved it. Abdullah's was wholly a show of the National Conference which he had revived and put together after its de facto disintegration during his 22 years' wanderings in the political wilderness. Much as his wings were clipped by the Central Government, one visible proof of his political effectiveness was that the three most important posts in the government, namely those of the Chief Secretary, the I.G. Police and the Chief Justice were held by Kashmiris, and Muslims at that during Abdullah's tenure (Noor Mohammad, Hasan Pirzada and Bahaud-Din Farooqi) which never

happened before and after.

Dr. Farooq, his son and successor, got the Chief Ministership the easy way. But his first frustration stemmed from the union government's opposition to the passage of the Re-settlement Bill which his father had willed on his death-bed. The dictator in Indira exerted a lot of pressure on Farooq to have an electoral alliance of National Conference with the Congress in state elections due in 1983. Farooq did not oblige. Instead he forged an alliance with his namesake, Mirwaiz Molvi Farooq, Chairman of the Awami Action Committee and a hereditary political heavyweight. Mirwaiz had throughout been pro-Pakistan. Dr. Farooq succeeded in winning elections. In a house of 76 members, he had the support of 46.

The alliance strengthened forces of political opposition to India. In June, 1983 after Friday prayers, the green flag of the Awami Action Committee and the red flag of the National Conference were hoisted together. In fact, both these flags were hoisted by youngmen even on public buildings including the office of the Director-General Police. On 14th August, the Pakistani flag was hoisted and saluted by the Kashmiri Muslims and there was a march-past. There was illumination at night, a number of firecrackers were exploded in celebration of the Pakistan Day, and full-throated slogans of 'Pakistan Zinda Baad' and 'Hindustan murda baad' were raised by big crowds. On the next day i.e. 15th which was the Indian Independence Day, a bomb blast took place in the Sports Stadium in Srinagar where Dr. Farooq was attending an official function as Chief Minister. In September, a bomb blast took place in the well-known Coffee House in Srinagar. On 13th October, a cricket match between the Indian and West Indies teams started in Srinagar. Dr. Farooq was also witnessing the match when slogan-raising crowds hooted the Indian team with shouts of 'Indian dogs go back'. Pressurised by the Indian Government, Dr. Farooq had to arrest two of the prominent activists, Majeed Lala and Hashim Qureshi. In January, 1984, Kashmir Liberation Front kidnappers of the Indian diplomat, Mahtre, living in Birmingham city of United Kingdom, demanded the release of these two and one Altaf Mahajan, by the Indian authorities in exchange for that of Mahtre. As the Indian authorities did not agree, Mahtre was killed by his kidnappers. On 17th January, prominent workers of National Conference in Kashmir raised slogans:-

Farzi naata torh dou
Kashmir hamara chorh dou

On 11th February, Maqbool Butt, a freedom fighter who had been in prison since 1976 was hanged in Tihar jail in Delhi. Butt had been responsible for setting up cells of Liberation Front in Kashmir

since the late 60's. He was convicted of killing an intelligence cop and a banker. The Mirwaiz hailed him as a hero and led his funeral prayer. 1

On 15th August, 1984, the Indian Independence Day, Indian flags were burnt in Kashmir and people observed it as a day of mourning, with complete black-out of lights in the evening. Under Premier Indira's orders, a little earlier in June the Indian military cracked down on Sikhs who were demanding an independent homeland under the leadership of Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwala. This military operation code-named 'Operation Blue Star' is well-known. Farooq was sympathetic and in contact with leaders of AISSF (All India Sikh Students Federation). Flushed with a sense of victory over the storming of the Golden Temple in Amritsar, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi manoeuvred to get Dr. Farooq dismissed and installed his brother-in-law, G.M. Shah on July 2, 1984 as Chief Minister. Shah had the support of NC dissidents and formed his government with the help of 26 Congress members in the Assembly. The National Conference got split into two factions: one headed by Farooq and the other by his elder sister, Khalida Shah, who was wife of G.M. Shah.

Shah remained in power till March, 1986 when the State was put under Governor's rule for six months and then under President's rule till March, 1987, when elections to the State Assembly were held.

The Kashmiri Muslims had in the meantime forged the Muslim United Front in which the Peoples League, the Jamaat-Islami, the pro-Plebiscite elements and all those opposed to Indian occupation of Kashmir got together on a common platform. This Front wanted to fight injustice from within the state assembly, ameliorate the economic plight of the people, combat unemployment and create conditions, by constitutional methods, to force India to honour her commitments and allow a free plebiscite under UN auspices.

In November, 1986, Farooq Abdullah signed an accord with Rajiv Gandhi, who succeeded his assassinated mother as Prime Minister of India on 31st October, 1984. This accord was characteristic of Dr. Farooq's opportunism. The Congress and NC agreed to put up joint candidates in the elections.

During the years 1984 to 1987, the opposition to Indian occupation which had been mounting with every passing day, often erupted in slogans of 'Indian dogs go back', pro-Pakistan and pro-plebiscite slogans. Free and fair elections in Azad Kashmir in 1985 with an elected Prime Minister and an elected President threw into sharp focus the puppet regime of G.M. Shah in Indian-occupied Kashmir.

The elections of March, 1987 to the State Assembly in IOK amounted to a tremendous fraud on the people of Kashmir. They were amazed to see the self-same Farooq Abdullah who had said in

1983 that a vote for Congress amounted to treachery with Kashmir, now canvassing support for Congress candidates. According to the directions of the Central Government, the Kashmir administration which was then under what is called President's rule, allowed Dr. Farooq's workers and hoodlums. to rig elections by every possible method while the official machinery provided all facilities for doing so.

According to the celebrated fortnightly Indian magazine, 'India Today' dated 15th April, 1987 the elections were rigged in a horrific manner. The polling took place in a blanket curfew which continued for five days after to allow fabricated tabulation of results in Anantnag, Handwara, Sopor and Baramulla. This was the only state in the Indian Union where results of polling were not declared even after a week. For example Abdul Gani Lone's party was very popular in Handwara, Kupwara, Sangram and Bandipur. But in Kupwara where he was invincible, counting of votes was postponed at the eleventh hour. Lone and his agents were turned out from the polling station so that they could not oversee counting of votes. He complained to the Election Commission that about one hundred of his polling agents had been arrested but in vain. After a few days, it was announced that Lone had been defeated. The pattern was the same everywhere.

In Doru, Anantnag, the Presiding Officer declared the National Conference candidate successful, when on opening some ballot boxes he found him to lead by 300 votes. But he refused to open another box which contained about 1100 votes. In this way, Farooq's alliance got 70 seats out of 76. The candidates of MUF were declared to have lost.

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India had thus slammed shut all doors of peaceful and non-violent resolution of the Kashmir problem.

Notes

1. Link Magazine, dated 8 July, 1984 Page 84.
2. India Today Magazine, dated April 15, 1987, Page 78.

Chapter 5

Outbreak of Freedom-Fight

The alliance of Congress with the National Conference of Dr. Farooq Abdullah and the shameless rigging resorted to, helped Dr. Farooq to form a government in April 1987 with himself as Chief Minister, but nobody knew better than he the bitterness caused in the ranks of the MUF (Muslim United Front). Anticipating trouble from that quarter, Farooq with the blessings of Rajiv Gandhi cracked down on the Front. Syed Ali Gilani, Qazi Nisar, Prof. Abdul Gani Lone, Ghulam Qadir Wani and some lesser lights from amongst leaders, were put behind bars and a large number of young activists were put behind bars and a large number of young activists were arrested on trumped up charges under the Terrorist and the Enemy Agents Acts. Many innocent people, merely suspected to be sympathetic to the MUF, were arrested, stripped naked in police stations or interrogation centres and tortured. Farooq was trying now to wash the sin of his previous association with Mirwaiz and other anti-India elements and the Plebiscite Front of which he had been an active worker himself even in the lifetime of his father. Way back in 1974, during a visit to Pakistan, he had played a leading role in an important session of the Front in Mirpur (Azad Kashmir) from 25th May to 30th. In November the same year he had played host in Srinagar to six delegates of the Kashmir Liberation Front from England who advocated Kashmir's freedom from Indian bondage in a meeting in Lal Chowk Srinagar. However now he was more loyal than the king. Hence arbitrary and unexpected arrests, the dread

midnight knock at the door and torture and humiliation at the hands of Rajiv and Farooq's hoodlums and the police personnel became the order of day.

To placate public anger, which was rising to a high crescendo, Farooq ordered on 7th October, 1987 that the traditional 'Darbar move' to Jammu during winter months would not take place which meant that the Secretariat and the heads of departments would continue to function in Srinagar. This was done in view of the violent attacks on Kashmiri employees by the Shiv Sena, a militant Hindu organisation, in Jammu during the winter of 85-86. But Farooq, always lacking in moral backbone, could not face the angry reaction to this step from either his Congress supporters or the Delhi government. As a result he had to withdraw his order and restore the old practice.

This disgraceful act of opportunism added fuel to the fire of discontent in the Valley. On top of it all, there was rank corruption all around. According to 'India Today' a fortnightly Indian magazine dated 31st May, 1989 Farooq was fiddling while Kashmir was burning. For admission to Jhelum Valley Medical College, the ruling rate of bribe rose to 2 lacs for one seat. Ministers were constructing palatial houses in Barzala and Raj Bagh, two posh localities. Ten crores were being squandered on a golf course, at the expense of more urgent public projects.

In the winter of 87-88, downtown Srinagar, one of storm-centres of political agitation, remained plunged in darkness and freezing cold because of frequent failure of electricity, either by accident or design.

Meanwhile desperate youngmen wanted to do anything to end the oppressive system, flourishing with the patronage of Rajiv Gandhi, the Indian Prime Minister. They had before them the heroic struggle being waged by the Sikhs in the Punjab and the inspiring spectacle of average Afghan citizens taking on a mighty superpower like Soviet Union. They established contact with the Afghan Mujahideen, crossed over to Pakistan, joined the Mujahideen ranks to get practical training in a real war in Afghanistan.

'India Today' in its issue of 31st May, 1989 recounts at page 88 the boundless joy of Shoaib Mohammad, 19, an unemployed undergraduate who went in May, 1988, to meet his friend in Mohallah Shamsuari of Srinagar. Addressing the friends' mother, he says: "Don't bother now. We will give fitting reply to arbitrary arrests and midnight knocks at our doors by the police." Whipping out a revolver, he presses its trigger in sheer exuberance, but the bullet hits and hurts Fatima whom he rushes to a hospital in a rickshaw. However entire Kashmiri youth is jubilant and proud at their new-acquired power. They cannot be killed any more like rats, they said. In that very month, a big bomb blast rocked and damaged the

Central Telegraph Office in Srinagar, a department run by the Union Government. The D. G. of Police, Ghulam Jeelani Pandit, addressed a press conference which was reported next day, 9th June, 1988 in the daily Aftab of Srinagar. The D.G. admitted that the bomb had been planted by what he called militants. He also disclosed the arrest of 29 youngman, tipped off by the Indian Intelligence Bureau. These freedom fighters included Bashir Ahmad But of Soura, Nisar Ahmad Shah of Sola, Bilal Siddiq and Abdul Qayyum Beg of Hyderpura. They belonged to the People's League, Islamic Students League and Islami Jammet-e-Talba, former components of MUF. According to the DG, all militancy was accomplished in the name of JKLF which accepted responsibility for it. The other prominent fighters were Yaseen Malik, Ashfaq Majeed Wani, Maqbool Illaee, Bilal Siddiq, Ahsan Dar, Abdual Hamid Sheikh, Javed Ahmad Mir, Javed Ahmad Zargar, Ijaz Ahmad Dar, Abdul Ahad and Manzur-ul-Islam, followers of Syed Shabbir Shah and Syed Ali Gilani, leaders of Peoples' League and Jamat-e-Islami. Of these youngmen, Ashfaq Majeed Wani and Ijaz Ahmad Dar are known to have since been martyred by Indians.

The entire summer of 1988 witnessed strikes by students, by government employees and shop-keepers against police excesses, hike in rates of electricity, shortage of essential commodities, particularly meat, which was un-available for two months.

On 10th June, 1988, there was a massive public procession to protest against electricity rates. The procession started from Khanyar and passed through Boohri Kadal and Zaina Kaddal. The police used force to disperse the crowd. But the youngmen, feeling terribly desperate, used stones and crude petrol bombs to fight the police. In consequence of this, one policeman Ratan Lal died while three Muslim youth were killed by police firing. Ratan Lal's dependents were paid a compensation of one lac, but not a penny was given to the families of three bread winners killed by police firing.

From October 1988 to April, 1989, about 100 freedom fighters, 45 of them belonging to Kupwara, were arrested alongwith automatic weapons. One Mujahid, Wazir Ahmad (not real name) passed through Nauhatta Chowk and reached the Jama Masjid of Srinagar. He addressed a crowd of two and a half lacs and said, "If they think they have arrested all Mujahids, they are just pleasing themselves. Are you prepared to die for Azadi? We have seen Indian democracy and promises. These people are thieves, daciots and fakes." "Mirwaiz Farooq addressed a mammoth crowd of 13 lacs and asked his listeners to purchase guns not VCRs. The Roll of Honour of those martyred till then was read out. In Khanyar and Nawakadal localities, there was continous strike for four days in protest against police excesses which developed into a pitched battle between freedom fighters and police. Meanwhile Shabbir Shah a

leading member of Peoples League and a dedicated young-man who had been arrested and tortured a number of times before, was arrested again by the security forces in March, 1989. This sparked off more clashes with the police. The youngmen who acquitted themselves with bravery were hauled up on their shoulders and showered with kisses and compliments by the cheering crowds.

A reporter of 'India Today' dated 31st May, 1989 asked for the reactions of a 'Shikara' (luxury boat) owner who said that the last year he used to earn Rs. 300/- in a single day but this year (May, 1989) he had earned fifty rupees in 10 days because of armed clashes with police. "The people have no alternative - they are sick of bribery and police excesses," he said.

Ashiq Hussain, 18, of Maisuma Srinagar graduated from the status of a hero to that of a martyr. He was suspected of making bombs. The police kept him locked up in interrogation centres for six months. In one anti-India demonstration a police bullet ripped through his chest. His grandma, Rahati and his mother Hameeda now kiss his photo. From the same locality, Mohammad Yasin Malik, 22, took part in a number of protest processions. He was arrested, beaten up, spat upon, abused abscenely and tortured physically. Suffer as he did from congenital heart disease, he was put in a cage in jail, receiving no treatment. Driven to desperation, he went on a hunger-strike and had to be released. Even on the day of this writing, he is in Agra Jail, far away from his homeland. Maisuma in Srinagar, it may be noted, was a stronghold of Sh. Abdullah during his life-time. Anyhow, anybody saying anything against him could be lynched by its residents. Events have turned full cycle due to the misdeeds of his son, so much so that now any person is in danger of being lynched if he speaks in favour of Abdullah or his family.

The entire valley was in a state of turmoil because of the arrest of top leaders, all youngmen in their twenties with only some in their thirties. On 8th December, 1989, Dr. Rubaiya Saeed, 23, daughter of Mufti Saeed, India's Home Minister in the Janata Dal government headed by V.P. Singh, was kidnapped at about 3.30 P.M. when she was returning home in a bus from Lalla Ded Memorial Hospital Srinagar where she was an intern. To the argument that kidnapping a woman was wrong, the freedom-fighters said: Where was your morality when your police arrested Abdul Hamid Sheikh's mother and confined her in the police station? Rubaiya Saeed was treated with great respect and made as comfortable as possible. But her kidnapping sent shock waves throughout India, as she was the Home Minister's daughter. The kidnappers demanded release of five freedom fighters in exchange. Eventually, through the mediation of Justice ML Bhatt of the Allahabad High Court, Dr. Abdul Ahad Guru and Mian Abdul Qayoom, a local lawyer she was released after Dr. Farooq's administration set free the five nominated heroes. .

There was widespread rejoicing. Even school-children came out in processions, saying:

Jis Ke dil main Khuda ka kahuf who utha le Klashinkof.
(Whoever has fear of God should pick up Klashinkov)

A police officer, quoted by 'India Today' observed:

"It is a surprising phenomenn. A people who could not bear to see the slaughter of a chicken are not afraid of killing or getting killed. In fact, they have become absolutely fearless and this is the biggest revolution that has taken place. Previously they used to duck for cover after lobbing a home-made bomb or throwing stones. Not any more. They face you without batting an eyelid."

Soon however the Butcher of Bharat, Jagmohan was sent by Delhi as Kashmir governor. By the time he reached Srinagar on 21st January, 1990, there had been mass defiance of curfew. In the next five days, peaceful but huge processions, chanting anti-India and pro-freedom slogans were fired upon, killing about 40 persons. This is the official figure, which is much less than the actual one, to say nothing of those wounded and disabled.

Writing in 'India Today', dated 15th Mrch, 1990, PANKAT Pajouri says, "It was the first Friday in months that curfew had been lifted in Srinagar city. Yet even on 23rd February, the shops remained closed. The people however emerged with multi-coloured flags in the air. Tens of thousands of youth, women and children came out on the streets, singing verses from the Quran and raising slogans for freedom. The procession snaked through the posh Residency road to UN observers' Office to submit a memorandum seeking plebiscite in Kashmir. Some were clad in white death-shrouds and the refrain that echoed and re-echoed was:

Karo Jahad gaawo - Maro ya marjaawo
(Sing about waging Jihad. Get killed or kill)

One 21st May, 1990, Mirwaiz Molvi Farooq was gunned down by three agents of RAW, speaking fluent Kashmiri and pretending to be freedom-fighters. But the bubble of flasehood got pricked when security forces opened fire on the mammoth funeral procession killing 47 and wounding hundreds. The firing was so indiscriminate that the bier, carrying the body of Mirwaiz, fell down on the ground.

Reverting again to 'India Today' of 11th August, 1990, one is amazed and inspired to note the motivation, dedication and above all, the tender ages of the young freedom-fighters, mostly in their teens and high-school classes. An 11-men patrol of the Indian army, the magazine narrates noticed rustling of leaves along a ravine. The JCO and his deputy, a naik, decided to check. Both were cut down by fire. The rest of the platoon took positions and asked for reinforcement. The militants, crossing the border from Azad Kashmir kept firing and refused repeated offers to surrender. But

after 28 hours of continuous defiance, without food and water, their nerves snapped, and they came out in a suicidal charge, klashinkovs blazing. Thirteen died, three escaped and one was captured. he was a porter, Mohsin Dar, only 18. The real fighters fought to the finish. Mohsin Dar's photo appeared in the same issue of the magazine, a handsome young boy, from some good family who chose to be a porter instead of a fighter to sustain the group.

Towards the close of November, a group of 25 freedom fighters ambushed a big convoy of over 100 military trucks passing through a jungle in Kupwara, killing 110 Indian soldiers, destroying all vehicles but three which were driven by three freedom fighters who knew driving. The arms and ammunition in the trucks having been unloaded, the vehicles were burnt. This news was blocked out by India, mostly probably because it would demoralise the army. But the story is correct.

In the summer of 1990 the present writer happened to meet two freedom-fighters in Rawalpindi, one seventeen, the other eighteen. In reply to my question as to why he had come to Pakistan, the first one said he had two elder brothers, the eldest was killed by the Indian forces and the other picked-up whose whereabouts are still unknown, he said. His college was also closed. So he asked for the permission of his parents to go across for some training and weapon so that if he could return, he could die fighting like a hero, not get killed like a rat. The second teen-ager said, his father had died by a stray bullet of the Indian military. He had one younger brother, a child of seven and two sisters. It was his widowed mother who told him: "Son! Why wait for being killed or caught? They won't spare you even though you are not involved. I have got four young brothers. Here is some money. Go across to Pakistan and if you can come back, trained and equipped, kill these cruel Indians before you become a martyr". Another young boy was asked by his maternal uncle, a very prosperous business-man in Pakistan, to stay back and study in an engineering college for which the latter would make all arrangements. The boy said: I have my rendezvous with 'Shahadat' (martyrdom). So many of my dear ones have been unjustly killed and dishonoured that I have to get back to avenge those wrongs.

No wonder that in such an emotionally charged atmosphere, in the words of the Indian magazine quoted earlier, dated 15 May, 1990, "Families send their 15 year old sons to Pakistan for training, after a special Mehndi ceremony, in which the young boy's hands are dyed in henna like a would-be groom." The only difference is that the ceremony is marked more by tears than by joy, for they visualise hardship and death instead of comfort and enjoyment for their loved one.

All along the pattern of the freedom-fight has almost been the same. The targets are military and para-military posts and bunkers,

military personnel oppressing a locality or proceeding on foot, military convoys, ammunition depots, Indian government installations, traitors and informers. The freedom-fighters maintain a high standard of personal conduct. They have been protecting and feeding minorities. In fact according to the report of four honest and conscientious Indian ladies, three of them non-Muslim, namely Premila, a journalist, Nandita Haksar, an advocate, Suhasini Mulay, a film-maker and Sakina Hasani a retired principal of a women's College in Srinagar, appended to this book, Jia Lal Raina, 50 a bachelor died in Srinagar on 11th June, 1990. As there was nobody to perform his last rites, the Muslims of the neighbourhood did so. In fact the Imam of the area, Haji Ahmad Ali, lit his funeral pyre. However Indian forces have display no bravery, no chivalry, not even the slightest humanity but a lot of savagery. The freedom fighters often elude them. So they take fearful revenge from innocent, uninvolved citizens, in house-to-house searches in which specified areas are condoned off, raping women, torturing and killing youngmen, beating up, detaining old men, even stealing their cash, jewellery and any voluables they can lay their hands on. They have started shelling innocent villagers by helicopter gunships which sometimes spray fatal chemicals. Most of the excesses are committed in the name of fighting so-called militants who are seldom there. The shelling is mostly due to sheer spite. Two reports by men and women of conscience and human-right groups in India appended to this book detail and highlight these shameful activities.

In the first week of January, 1991, the Indian Prime Minister Chandar Shekhar held a high-level meeting in New Delhi which was attended among others, by Dr. Farooq Abdullah, Mufti Saeed, Syed Mirqasim, Saifud-Din Soz, Payere Lal Handoo and Dr. Karan Singh. The object was to devise ways and means to bring an end to the armed insurgency. Dr. Karan Singh, the son of the late Maharaja of Kashmir, told the Prime Minister that the behaviour of the security forces had completely alienated the Kashmiri people. The meeting decided to re-open the political process by inviting the detained leaders of the freedomfight to negotiate with the government so as to give maximum internal autonomy to Kashmir under the Indian constitution. So far, despite unlimited pressure, the freedom-fighters have refused to talk on any basis other than freedom from Indian bondage. In fact, Farooq Abdullah, with his infinite lust for power, got a bullet-proof car and a helicopter from Chandar Shekhar in the hope that he would try to muster some political support for negotiation with the government. But the fact that he did not have courage to proceed beyond Jammu was a measure of his political isolation and complete ignorance of the situation on the ground in the Kashmir Valley.

One questionable development was the kidnapping of Naheed

Imtiaz, 29, the wife of an engineer and herself a lecturer in a local college. Naheed is the daughter of Saif-ud-Din Soz, a member of Indian Parliament from Baramulla on National Conference ticket in the November, 1989 elections. This election was a farce in Kashmir as it was boycotted by people. Anyhow, Naheed's kidnapping was not approved by many freedom-fighters who thought that RAW had master-minded it through one Bilal of the Kashmir Students Liberation Front. Although Naheed was released after some days in exchange for a few detained youngmen, sane elements considered the incident as one giving an image of terrorists to genuine freedom-fighters. These elements also deprecated the killing of Mashir-ul-Haq V.C. of Kashmir University, his Secretary Abdul Ghani and Mr. Khera in 1990 as selfdefeating and harmful. The killing of innocent human beings as retaliation for failure to secure release in exchange for a few prisoners does not make much sense when thousands are languishing in Indian prisons and torture cells. According to genuine freedom fighters, these kidnaps and killings are masterminded by RAW to erode public support for freedomfighters.

The Indian response to the demand of the Kashmiri Muslim for self-determination has been unparalleled repression, disinformation, and infiltration into the ranks of freedom-fighters. The dimensions of some of these measures have been spelt out in the succeeding chapters.

Chapter 6

Unparalleled Barbarity of Indian Occupation

True the nazis collected Jews in concentration camps and killed by forcing them into gas chambers. But this writer has not so far been able to lay his hands on any evidence that they gang-raped unmarried girls and married women in advanced stages of pregnancy or threw acid on the faces of live Jewish youth to disfigure them or after killing them to prevent their identification. In fact, there are allegations of young Kashmiri boys being thrown into acid tanks by Indians to ensure chemical dissolution of their bodies and complete disappearance of evidence. The Indian military and paramilitary forces have killed thousands of Kashmiris by transporting them to the line of control in fake crossings of the line from the Pakistani side. They have deprived the daily wage-earner in Kashmir of a living by imposing continuous curfew for months at a stretch. They have also the 'unique distinction' of denying medical aid to innocent victims of their indiscriminate firing by arresting doctors who evince keenness in treating them. The complaints that Indians prevent importation into Kashmir of any drugs and medicines for use in civil hospitals of the Valley are largely correct. These hospitals are short, in fact completely bereft, of life-saving drugs, medicines, necessary equipment and tools which have been purposely damaged or destroyed by Indian security forces. Doctors acting in accordance with the Hippocratic oath and treating and attending to the wounded, are arrested and tortured on the pretext of being sympathetic to 'militants'. In torture cells, about twenty thousand

flowers of Kashmiri youth are being subjected to unspeakable atrocities, including damaging, burning, even crushing of testicles to further the devilishly calibrated campaign of genocide of Kashmiri Muslims. All this is being done under the direction and supervision of Girish Saxena, the Governor, who as head of RAW has perfected the art of carrot and stick, overwhelmingly stick and very little carrot.

The whole civilised world is aghast at the grisly stories of burning of whole towns and residential localities to facilitate the decimation of shelterless Kashmiri Muslims through pneumonia and other diseases in the freezing cold of Kashmir winter. Fire-brigades are not allowed to extinguish the fires and firemen who insist on proceeding are beaten up. Every now and then news filters in about Indians entering the houses of Kashmiri Muslims in the early hours of the morning, stripping away their quilts and blankets with the same object. Most of these quilts are piled and put to torch as Hindu soldiers cannot pollute themselves by using even the clean quilts of 'unclean' Muslims. About two thousand men, women and children, mostly young men, have been killed by the Indians, and more than ten thousand lie wounded, crippled and maimed. About twenty thousand arrested young men are languishing in torture cells where they are starved, beaten, insulted, abused, harassed mentally, and tortured physically.

Another trick being played by Black Cats, the counter-insurgency commandoes pressed into service by Governor Saxena is to go about in the dress and the masks of the freedom-fighters, and tell an innocent Muslim that he is spying on them and then kill him and his young children in a gruesome manner, cutting off the breasts of young, married and unmarried women to turn the tide of public wrath against the Mujahideen. This is precisely how Mirwaiz Maolvi Farooq was murdered by Hindu commandoes of RAW, speaking Kashmiri language and claiming to be freedom-fighters. This canard was given a lie by the subsequent firing of Indian security forces on the funeral procession of the Mirwaiz and the resultant exposure of the Indian conspiracy to stir up a public sentiment against freedom-fighters.

What the Indians are doing to Kashmiris is reminiscent of a story in which a habitual stealer of shrouds of freshly buried bodies, while on his death-bed asked his son to do something which would force people to talk well of his deceased father. The son improved on the method of his father by not merely stealing the shroud, but also chopping off the nose and ears of his victims. The result was that people started saying, "His father had at least compassion. He did not mutilate dead bodies". So has India shamed Hitler's Nazi hordes.

A report given by eminent Indian Hindus, all men of conscience and representing different human rights group, shows the shameful and inhuman character of the atrocities being perpetrated

in occupied Kashmir. This report gives a lie to the Indian claims to secularism, democracy and even to civilised behaviour. These four organisations appointed a joint team to visit occupied Kashmir and to make an on-the spot assessment of the situation. The team included Mr. V. M. Tarkund, a former Chief Justice of Bombay High Court, Rajindar Sachar, Amarik Singh, Balraj Puri and four others. They visited the area twice in March and April 1990. Some of their observations are given below.

“Although our hotel proprietor (in Srinagar) was a Muslim, he had employed a Hindu named Gautam of 22 years age hailing from Darjeeling. Gautam felt absolutely safe. Jagan Nath, a Kashmiri Pundit, and a resident of Srinagar, had met two of our members in Delhi on March 25, 1990. Jagan Nath told us that there was complete communal harmony in the Valley and those who were coming had either overreacted to the situation or come because of certain other reasons such as curfew, winter, closure of all institutions such as banks, schools, post offices etc. The Muslims of Kashmir genuinely wanted Kashmiri Pundits to return to the Valley. Not a single case of arson or looting of non-Muslims’ property had taken place. Regarding himself, Pt. Jagan Nath said he would be returning to the Valley in the second week of April, 1990”.

About atrocities by security forces, the report says, “One 31.3.1990 a group of children of age 11-12 assembled at the house of a teacher to have tuition from him in Vacharnag locality of Srinagar. The teacher was non-Muslim and all pupils except one were also non-Muslims. There was an incident in the vicinity and the CPRF men burst into this house. They asked for the identity of people with their names. Only the Muslim boy was shot and killed.

“On 29.3.1990, at about 8.30 a.m. (when curfew was not in force) security forces fired without any provocation upon a three-wheeler and a Matador van. This led to several deaths including that of a pregnant woman and her 8 year old son. We visited the injured husband in the hospital and got the full story from him.

“We met several injured persons in the hospitals. Ghulam Kadir from Brij Behera, a 20 year old person, while he was closing his shop during curfew relaxation on 24.3.1990, was fired upon by the security forces, injuring his right hand. Shri Bashir Ahmed, a gardener in the state government garden department, was shot on 26.2.1990. He, alongwith others, was asked to get down from the truck, and despite pleas of innocence, we were fired upon”.

“Rajinder Singh taxi driver told us that certain interested elements were propagating that all those non-Muslims who migrated to Jammu or elsewhere would be provided free plots, cash and other facilities. There was a deliberate attempt to communalise the situation by setting up relief camps outside the Valley. According to Rajinder Singh, when thousands of Sikhs were massacred in Delhi in

November 1984, and hundreds of Muslims were killed in communal riots in UP and Bihar, no relief camps were ever established in areas away from towns where they had been living. While there is not a single case of communal rioting in the Valley, how come that Governor Jagmohan preferred to set up relief camps at a distance of 300 miles in Jammu?

"The members of the team were also told of the grievance that while non-Muslims who were in relief camps were getting their salaries, Muslim employees who were in the Valley and could not attend their duties because of curfew, were not receiving any payment. Similarly, the Governor preferred to pay compensation to families of non-Muslims who were considered informers, but so far, not a penny has been paid to many more such Muslim families of the victims.

"Another significant demand which came from one and all was that they wanted Kashmiri Pundit families to return to their homes. 'We are all Kashmiris and we can guarantee better security to them than all the security forces.

"The Kashmiri Muslims' contention is that their brethren Kashmiri Pundits are being evacuated under a conspiracy."

In the view of the writer as also of the Muslim residents of the Valley, this evacuation by coercion, temptation and misrepresentation was effected to facilitate the subsequent indiscriminate killing of Muslims, without non-Muslims being harmed; otherwise, the Hindu minority in Kashmir has such great confidence in Muslims that they have mostly given the keys of their houses to their Muslim neighbours before leaving.

The suspicion of genocidal intention becomes strong when we remember that all international agencies engaged in humanitarian work such as Amnesty International, and international Red Cross have been persistently refused permission upto this day to go to the Valley. Even foreign correspondents of prestigious Western media were forced to leave Srinagar when Indian forces started their genocidal campaign. If the Indian conscience was clear, their intentions honest, their hands clean, and only lawful and normal punitive action was to be taken against freedom-fighters, why were foreign correspondents forced to leave and refused re-entry afterwards? Under the Disturbed Areas Act, draconian powers have been given to security forces. They can shoot and kill any person; and without any warrant, search, demolish, destroy and burn any building on mere suspicion. Isn't this a thinly-veiled cover to carry out genocide? Why was such draconian censorship imposed that all the Muslim editors of local newspapers stopped publication of their papers? Is there any parallel in contemporary history of such unfettered powers being given to police under civilian rule?

In fact, a little commonsense enables one to see the clear outlines

of a diabolical plan of genocide. The wilful torching of houses is aimed at breaking the will of the people on seeing their shelterless infants and young children die out in the open in the freezing cold of Kashmir winter. The same is the objective of raping respectable womenfolk within the view of their fathers, brothers and husbands. In addition, most of the Muslims in the border belt near the Line of Control have been killed or pushed by rapine and arson into Azad Kashmir. A well thought out plan of killing, incapacitating, even emasculating, the young generation from ages 12 to 35 appears to be underway. That is why, according to the report of the group mentioned above, innocent citizens absolutely not connected with the activities of the militants, are killed, their women-folk raped their valuables looted, and their houses and buildings burned. Above 262 children in a school in Kupwara were burnt alive when it was set ablaze by Indian soldiers.

By the imposition of curfew for months at a stretch, daily wage-earners, shop-keepers, tongawalas, cabmen and boatmen have been reduced to starvation. All trade including tourist trade has come to a standstill; fruit has rotted, and whatever handicrafts existed, have either deteriorated or been destroyed. The result is economic strangulation of Kashmiri Muslims.

Chapter 7

Conspiracy of Disinformation and Silence

How fair and honest Indian press is about atrocities in Kashmir can be gauged from a report filed by an Indian correspondent, Rita Manchande, of the Far Eastern Economic Review as far back as 19th July, 1990. India's freewheeling press has long been seen", he writes, "as a symbol of the country's vigorous democracy. The brief period of emergency in the middle 1970's is explained away as an aberration. More typical has been the fierce resistance in recent year by India's Fourth Estate to censorship measures like the Bihar and Kashmir press bills. Yet ironically, the very editors who last year cried foul at the proposed Kashmir press bill, today readily acquiesce in official disinformation on Kashmir". Continuing, the report says, "Quite literally, the national press has turned its back on what should have been the story; Kashmir at War And so on 19th May, the newspapers quoting official sources reported yet another incident of 'crossfire'. However, this time it was not between the militants and the security forces, but between two paramilitary groups, the Central Police Force (CPRF) and the Border Security Forces (BSF). A trooper and a civilian were said to have been killed when a BSF picket fired on a vehicle carrying CPRF troops. A passing marriage party was said to have been caught in the 'crossfire', which killed one of the group and nine others. "No Indian journalist", the report adds, "thought it worth their while to go beyond the official version and compare, for instance, the situation report sent by the commander of the 3rd Brigade at Anantnag where the incident took place. The

Commander's report stated that at 11.30 PM, a BSF patrol stopped a bus carrying a marriage party of 27 people. The security forces opened fire and one passenger was killed and seven injured. The bride and bridesmaid were gangraped. Derek Brown of the London-based Guardian traced the bride and groom in a hospital at Anantnag where they had been admitted for gunshot wounds. India's national media contented themselves with the official version of crossfire.

In Kashmir, Mr. Rita Manchande reports, the word 'crossfire' has now become synonymous with indiscriminate firing at civilians by the security forces. In a similar 'Crossfire', a pregnant woman, her nine-year old son and the driver of their cycle rickshaw were among 11 passengers killed when security forces opened fire after a militant threw a handgrenade at security forces and escaped. The Indian media reported glibly that subversives including the mother, son and the driver were killed, although the pregnant mother was going to a hospital.

In March, 1990, Syed Afzal Gilani, an employee of the Indian MES, was picked up in Baramulla during an army search. The next day his mutilated corpse was handed over to his family. The All-India Radio reported it as an encounter death. Such deaths in fake encounters have become all too common. The massacre in Gaokadal Srinagar on 21st January, 1990, according to the Far Eastern Economic Review, was one in which men, women and children, peacefully protesting against excesses were mercilessly shot and killed. But it was described by 'India Today' as clashes in which security forces killed violent pro-Pakistan elements - a direct contradiction of eye-witness based reports broadcast by the BBC and confirmed by civil rights groups.

In the Newsweek issue of 26th November, 1990, a report was filed by Ron Moreu from Kashmir to the effect that Maimuna Akhtar, a 30-year old Muslim housewife, was offering her morning prayer in her upstairs bedroom in Srinagar, when in the street down below shooting erupted between freedom-fighters and paramilitary forces. A stray bullet hit Maimuna as she went to the window. She started bleeding. Another bullet struck her 7-year old daughter who was standing beside her. But when their panic-stricken family members tried to take them to the nearest hospital, the Indian troops refused to let them pass. "The Indian soldiers pointed their guns at us and shouted; "Stay home! Let them die here", recalled Muhammad Ramzan, the 12 years old son. "The Indians hate us that much". The mother bled to death which in the eyes of her mourners was yet another proof of the blind revenge Indians are taking on innocent Kashmiri Muslims.

How unbridled and arbitrary the Indian forces in Kashmir are is exemplified by the arrest of Yusuf Jameel, a correspondent of BBC, Reuter and Telegraph London. He was whisked away in the presence

of five eyewitnesses from his home in Srinagar by a Major of the Gorkha regiment and taken to Uri about 70 Kilometers west. The Kashmir Governor, the Corps Commander, the Indian Cabinet Security Vinod Pande and Home Secretary all denied his arrest and attributed the act to the militants. The case was also moved in the Indian Supreme Court by his powerful employers. The next day he was released and walked back to his home. The Indians got greatly embarrassed as the news hit banner headlines even in the international press. This incident shows what has happened to thousands of people who were not Yusuf Jameel!

According to testimony given by the US Congressman Eri Faleomavarga at a joint hearing of the House Sub-Committee on Asian and Pacific Affairs and Committee on Human Rights, a 'scorched earth' policy has become the standard modus operandi of the Indian security forces in Kashmir. They have burnt down thousands of houses, killing hundreds and rendering thousands homeless.

A report issued in December, 1990 by the Jammu and Kashmir Basic Rights Protection Committee, chaired by Bahaud-Din Farooqi, retired Chief Justice of High Court documents the following harrowing, heart-rending and brutal instances of human rights violations which have either been suppressed or ignored by the Indian media.

On July 16, 1990 at 7.00 PM, an 11-year old unmarried girl in Village Panzgam was gangraped by army personnel, male members having been tied to trees and forced to watch this humiliation.

One July 8, 1990, in Village Kagh Magan, 20 people were locked in a building which was set ablaze and the inmates burnt alive.

The report gives some horrifying details of the torture tactics of the Indian security forces.

- a. the detainees are made to drink urine.
- b. Heavy weights are tied to their private parts and they are forced to stand in that position for hours. They are also forced to drink large quantities of water so that the bladder is filled up. But since the unrating part is tied, they cannot relieve their bladder and resultantly, writhe in agony.
- c. The legs of the detainees are stretched 180 apart, by being tied to and pulled by two different ropes.
- d. They are subjected to forced homosexuality and also asked to recite the Holy Quran in this condition.
- e. Salt and red chillies are applied to green wounds.
- f. Pulses, rice, flour and other edibles are mixed with red chillies, petrol, clay and sand to render them uneatable.

In a New York Time story, Barbara Crosette writes of a Kashmiri police constable, Hanif Ahmad, who was picked up by Indian forces. He was subjected to electric shocks and his back and thighs burnt with hot irons. When he asked for water, they threw instead petrol mixed with chillies on his wound. Four days later, they had a driver throw him on the side of a road and overrun him. Luck favoured him as he did not die because a nearby shopkeeper saved him in time.

Still more blood-curdling, almost incredible evidence, collected by no less a person than the former Chief Justice himself after personally travelling to the affected villages of Kupwara District, gives the following account of 'Rape Enmass' on page 25 of Vol. 2 of the report, titled 'Kashmir Aflame'.

"One 10th and 11th August, 1990, the army soldiers rank and file, hovering around Pazi Pora, Bali Pora, Kanan etc. seem to have been overtaken by vengeance, greed and lust. They would shoot anyone, a passerby, a farmer, a teenage boy, an aged man an old woman or a man busy with his vocation. The Jawans were seen carrying bottles of liquor in their pockets and guns in their hands. More than a company of army Jawans descended on Pazi Pora and isolated womenfolk forcibly from children and men, despite protests, weeping and wailing. Most of the women had run for safety to the forests, but still 20 to 30 women were lodged in a spacious house. The army jawans got a scent of their presence and pounced upon them like vultures. All of them were brought out from the hiding place and 10/15 robust, attractive and healthy women in the age group of 7 to 50 years separated from the rest. One group of lustful soldiers tore their clothes to shreds and rendered them nude. A bonfire was made of their dresses/garments at the edge of a field of rice. The remnants of burnt clothes were found by the visiting members of the Committee even after a week. Another group gulping liquor from bottles jumped over them and took them to the same hiding place wherefrom they were forced out and raped them one by one. the 7-year old girl was still bleeding after 5 days. The group took their turn one woman after the other raising the slogan of "Jai Hind" and so on".

Brutalities in Patti Kababmarg

The Jawans of the security forces cracked down on the village for three consecutive days without any respite. All the inmates were forced out of their houses. All movables such as boxes, suit cases, utensil, vessels, containers were broken or damaged; jewellery, cash and gold ornaments stolen; hay and fuel thrown helter skelter;

eatables rendered uneatable.

Every mound and uneven surface which scared the soldiers were got dug by the helpless villagers as the soldiers wanted to "discover" the hidden dumps of ammunition. This futile exercise continued during the first night and the villagers were kept thirsty and hungry all through digging. New graves were got dug up several times on the suspicion of hiding arms. All residents, men and women, including young children were beaten mercilessly.

The Imam of the village was brutally assaulted by the jawans and asked why he led local Muslims in prayer. Alongwith questions about militants and their hideouts, they asked 'why freedom', 'whose freedom' and so on.

Rafiq, 16-year old good-looking daughter of Abdul Aziz Najar was dragged from her home, stripped and gangraped by the jawans.

According to 'India Abroad' dated 13th July, 1990 an Indian Journal issued from New York, Armed Forces Special Power Act has been enforced in Kashmir which gives wide powers to arrest and fire-to-kill to counter situations perceived to be disturbing public order. Further, it is said that under its special provisions "all situational decisions are discretionary". In essence this act empowers the armed forces to shoot and kill anybody with impunity - without fear of investigation, prosecution or punishment - since all that is required is the policeman or army man's subjective perception of a given situation, which in any event is upto his discretion.

According to a British newspaper 'Independent' from London, dated January 28, 1990, the CPRF was seen dragging people in Srinagar from their houses and then shooting them in coldblood. This was corroborated by Farooq Ahmad Wani, an Assistant Executive Engineer in the J & K Government, one of the survivors who is quoted by Tapan Bose in the Political and Economic Weekly dated March 31, 1990 as follows:-

"As I lifted my head, I saw a paramilitary Officer pump bullets into the bodies of those injured. A boy who was trying to hide under the platform of a bridge was killed. (Then) a CPRF man shouted "He is still alive". I pleaded I am a government officer. Please don't shoot. The officer shouted abuses at me and said, 'Islam mangta hai?' Do you want Islam and fired at me."

He was then mistaken to be dead and dumped in a paramilitary truck alongwith 30-35 other dead bodies to be thrown away in the river. However he had miraculous escape. Wani's narrative continues:

"A Kashmiri constable, discovering us alive, said: 'My God! These are living bodies here.' Those of us who were still alive pleaded: 'Please save us.' The doctor on duty in the police control room identified three others who were still alive, put us in the ambulance

and rushed us to the Bone and Joint Hospital. We later heard that the head constable who saw us - the living piled up with the dead in the truck - had later suffered a heart attack."

The above was the situation in Srinagar. What was happening in smaller towns is exemplified by the statement of A.K. Lone, President of the Handwara Bar Association, quoted below by the Punjab Human Rights Organisation in their report, 'Kashmir Under Seige' published in Chandigarh (India), 1990:-

"On 25th January, a peaceful procession of about 70,000 persons came from various villages of Handwara for a peaceful demonstration. They were unarmed and shouting slogans for independence. Paramilitary forces were stationed in police stations (sic) and had taken position ... without provocation the local police was directed to fire. They fired only in air as the crowd was peaceful. Then the paramilitary forces fired directly on the people who were chased and killed. This horror went on for one hour. 14 people were killed on the spot and more than 100 seriously injured.

"The next massacre took place on March 1, when a mammoth crowd of 5 lakhs, out of the total population of 8 lakhs of Srinagar city, was protesting against the atrocities of the paramilitary forces. At Tenggura, a bus carrying demonstrators was stopped by the army and passengers asked to climb down. As they were getting down, they were sprayed with bullets and hundreds were killed. But truth was suppressed by giving out the official version that the army opened fire only when a school bus was attacked by the crowd. This was a patent lie as all the schools were closed for winter vacation till 20th February and the Jammu and Kashmir Government had issued orders extending winter vacations upto 15th March. (Tapan Bose, Political and Economic Review, March 31, 1990).

Nevertheless, the media did not seek to expose this obvious lie, trotted out by the Indian army to cover their inhuman and cowardly performance (Behind the Events in Kashmir* by Indian Progressive Study Group, New York, page 15).

According to the Stateman (Calutta) May 18, 1990, doctors in all the state hospitals in the Valley went on strike against the atrocious behaviour of the security forces. It was also reported that hospitals in Srinagar were strewn with casualties suffering from bullet wounds. For instance, the Bone and Joint Hospital in Srinagar, had been receiving 300 cases every day.

An extract from the report of the Committee For 'Initiative on Kashmir,' taken from the Economic and Political weekly of March 31, 1990 shows how under the pretext of combing out miscreants in Chhanpur, Srinagar, atrocities were committed:

"We visited the area on March 14 and interviewed the victims - mainly women who were molested and raped by the paramilitary forces. Noor, 24, wife of Abdul Rahman Khan, told us that she was

working in the kitchen in the morning that day when she heard sounds of firing outside. She claims that some 20 CPRF personnel walked in, dragged her out and then beat her. As she tried to escape from them, two of them followed her into the kitchen. She was raped by these two CPRF men. She added that her sister-in-law (Zaina) was also raped”.

How reckless, indiscriminate and cruel the Indian security forces are can be judged from some more extracts from the report by the Committee, ‘For Initiative on Kashmir’:-

“They (the people of Kupwara town) said that on 10th and 11th night (of June, 1990) some of them were awake, watching a football world cup when at 12.05 midnight, they heard a bomb explosion, followed by firing which lasted for about 20 minutes. Soon after this the army began a cordon and search operation. We spoke to the residents of one area called the Malick Mohalla with a population of about 300 people. The army surrounded the area and asked the men and boys to collect on the main road. They then went back to search the houses which had women and girls in them. They beat up the women and swore at them asking where the militants were.”

“Abdul Majid Malik aged 20 years is the son of Ghulam Rasool Mullick. The four people in the house were Abdul Mazid (20), Bawa (20-22) Ghulam Mughai Bawa (20) and Ghulam Mohi-ud-din, all blind.”

“When the army men saw the boys in the house, they got very angry and began to beat them up with their guns. One of them put the gun in Abdul Majid’s eye, saying that he was pretending to be blind but was actually a Pakistani agent. They ransacked the house.”

“The Army also came to their (Ghulam Rasool Watch-maker’s) house on top of a shop and took away the father of Mehmooda, the 15-year old girl. She was left alone. She locked one door from inside. An hour later, five army jawans came, they broke the door open and grabbed her clothes. She ran away from them and jumped out of the window and injured her ankle. She fainted. Her relations suspect that she has broken her ankle, but nothing could be done as the town was under curfew.

“Tasneef Pani, 24, is a youngman whose father is a retired professor and an old National Conference worker. Tasneef is a B.Sc. Final student at the S.P. College, Srinagar.

“Tasneef and his younger brother, Owais, aged 20, years were picked up on April 30, 1990 in Srinagar. It was the month of Ramzan and the brothers were awake early in the morning for ‘Sehri’. The army came in three jeeps and one truck alongwith a women squad to their house. Both the boys were blindfolded and taken to the Airport Interrogation Centre. Here they were severely beaten. They were tortured and interrogated for three days. Owais was again

blindfolded and dropped off at Cheshma Shahi on the Dal Lake. But not Tasneef, who was transferred to Hari Niwas Interrogation Centre. Here he was further tortured, stripped naked, given electric shocks, and cigarette butts were pressed into his fingers."

"This interrogation continued for days together. He was released on 31-5.1990 after 31 days. He has still not recovered, is unable to speak coherently and slurs as he talks, though usually he keeps very quiet."

The former Chief Justice of Delhi High Court and President Peoples' Union of Civil Liberties, Rajindar Sachar. Says!

"The most bitter and tragic part of the situation is the killing and injuring of innocent people at the hands of the security forces".

(Quoted from 'Official Violence is not Answer' by Sachar in 'India Abroad', New York April 20, 1990).

Chapter 8

A Comparative Study with similar Struggles

The most impressive, in fact amazing, aspect of the current freedom-fight in Kashmir is its complete break with non-military traditions of the past, spanning a period of about four hundred years. In the three struggles for freedom in Vietnam, Algeria and Afghanistan during the second half of the current century, the background is entirely different. Vietnam has a history of fighting her adversaries, fighting in particular her great neighbour China over centuries and surviving as an independent country. During her relatively shorter colonial rule by France, she did not give up her martial traditions. Afghanistan has awesome military traditions. It has been the home of a fiercely free and independent people. Even the mighty British Empire, at the peak of its power, when the sun never set on it, tried to vanquish Afghanistan in three wars, but was defeated, even humbled. Algeria never ceased to be martial. During the last few centuries, it was part of that great Muslim Commonwealth, known as Ottoman Empire, to which the concepts of economic exploitation and political suppression, peculiar to western imperialism, were largely alien. That Kashmir is fighting in the manner she does is simply a miracle, something almost incredible, if we keep in view the historical background.

Wakefield, a British Officer of the Indian Political Service, Prime Minister of Kashmir roundabout 1930, narrates a story in his memoirs. Whether the story is true or concocted, it underlines the non-martial character of Kashmiris. The story is that, responding to

the demands of some people, Maharaja Ranbir Singh raised a regiment of Kashmiris. When they completed their training, they were asked to March from Srinagar to Jammu, a distance of 200 miles. The Regiment was disbanded when it demanded a police force for its protection enroute! That this Kashmiri is scaling today dizzying heights of bravery, making incredible sacrifices, facing the military might of India and unflinchingly suffering inhuman atrocities of Indian forces, is a fact stranger than the strangest fiction.

The second distinguishing feature relates to the poor, insufficient, hesitant and half-hearted support that the freedom-fighters are receiving from the Pakistan government. Most of it is just rhetoric. This is in sharp contrast with the massive and open military support that Afghan Mujahadeen have received from one superpower and western countries besides the material and moral support from Saudi Arabia, Iran and Pakistan. The late Col. Nasser and his regime were openly supportive of the Algerians in their war against the French (1954-62). In fact, there used to be an open allotment of funds for Algeria in the Egyptian budget. The Vietnames had open moral, material and military support of the other super-power, Soviet Union and the great Chinese republic during all the years extending from 1958 to 1975.

The third feature unique to the freedom-fight in Kashmir is the character, culture and conduct of the Indian security forces against which the Kashmir is pitted. In Vietnam, the adversary was the US soldier who had to follow a minimal code of civilised behaviour, because the founding fathers of his country laid down certain basic principles of state policy in regard to respect for human life, liberty and happiness. The searchlight of a powerful and free US press and media was focused on the acts and omissions of US armed forces and hell was raised if an incident like My Lai, involving gross violation of human rights, was unearthed. This is largely true of Soviet troops in Afghanistan also as western media would blow out of proportion and serious diviation from the norms of civilised behaviour. In Kashmir, Indians have put Hulage and Hitler to shame because no beast is half as beastly as a human being who loses his humanity. Barring some men of conscience, India has fallen from the high moral ground of Gandhian non violence to the lowest depths of non-violence, cruelty and shamelessness. Her record of atrocities in Kashmir is incredibly barbarous.

The fourth contrast is that the freedom fight in Kashmir has not so far had the benefit of guidance and direction by any leader of the stature of Ho Chi Min in Vietnam, Farhat Abas, Ben Bella, Hourri Boumediyan in Algeria and time-tested commanders like Ahmad Shah Masood and Abdul Haq in Afghanistan. Names of martyrs like Maqbool Butt and Ashfaq Majid Wani or imprisoned heroes like Shabbir Shah, Yasin Malik, and Abdul Hamid Sheikh have shone

across the political horizon of Kashmir like meteors but so far no leader of outstanding stature has emerged who can by common acclaim serve as a beacon-light or rallying point for the various groups of freedom-fighters.

The fifth difference which marks this movement as something superior to similar ones, whether recent or long past, is the tolerance and compassion shown by the Kashmiri Muslims towards their Kashmiri non-Muslim neighbours in the Valley. The Kashmiri Pandits, forced or persuaded by the Indian authorities, to leave the Valley, have acknowledged, according to Indian human-right activists and eminent and conscientious Indians Hindus, that they were treated very well by their Muslim neighbours and guaranteed better security by the freedom-fighters than all the Indian security forces could extend. While in Kashmir, the Muslims fed and maintained them in the same manner as other Muslims during curfews and army clamp-downs. In fact, many of them left the keys of their houses and valuables with their Muslim neighbours. Some of them lodged in refugee camps in Jammu, were all too keen to return to the Valley despite all the hazards involved. That those left in the Valley were properly looked after by Muslims is proved by the instance cited in the report 'Kashmir Imprisoned' by the lady members of the Indian Committee for Initiative on Kashmir, appended to this book. One Jia Lal Raina, 50, a bachelor died in one locality of Srinagar. As there were no Hindus to perform his last rites, the Muslims undertook to do so. In fact, Haji Ahmad Ali, the Imam of the local mosque, lighted his funeral pyre.

This happened sometime in June 1990. Of course, some Kashmiri Pandits have been killed by freedom-fighters on account of being informers and spies. But the number of Muslims killed for the same reason is much greater.

Another baffling feature has been the practical blackout by the western media of the news regarding flagrant violations of human rights by Indian military and paramilitary forces. The Amnesty International, and the International Red Cross, both dominated by the West, and almost all foreign journalists and media men have been denied permission to visit Indian-occupied Kashmir. And yet there is neither any news about the daily death-toll in the freedom-fight nor about the shameful gangrapes and heartless killings of innocent citizens, men, women and children although such news goes out. This is in sharp contrast with the exaggerated publicity given to whatever excesses the Pakistani military was alleged to have committed in former East Pakistan during the civil war which culminated in the birth of Bangladesh. This yawning chasm between the professions and practice of western countries, particularly and United States, exposes fully their double standards.

Appendix 1

Report on Kashmir

This report by four Indian organisations gives the lie to the Indian claims to secularism, democracy and even to a civilised status. The People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL), the Citizens for Democracy, the Radical Humanist Association and the Manav Ekta Abhiya (of India) appointed a joint team to visit Kashmir and make a first-hand assessment of the situation there. It comprised S/Shri V.M. Tarkunde, Rajinder Sachhar, Amrik Singh, Balraj Puri, Inder Mohan, Ranjan Dwivedi, N.D. Pancholi and T.S. Ahuja. Its first visit was from 9th to 13th March and the second from 28th to 3rd April, 1990. Both Srinagar and Jammu were visited as also a few outlying town.

Our team members S/Shri V. M. Tarkunde, Rajinder Sachhar, Amrik Singh, Balraj Puri, Inder Mohan, Ranjan Dwivedi, N.D. Parcholi and T.S. Ahuja, were able to meet cross-sections of people in large numbers wherever we went.

the team members covered certain areas together and also in groups of two and three according to their arrivals in Jammu, Srinagar and Annatnag.

Groups of individuals from all walks of life such as lawyers, businessmen, retired officers, government employees, journalists, intellectuals and other well-known citizens met us on their own initiative. Simultaneously, we visited quite a number of areas with their cooperation. The places where we went included Gow Kadal,

Zakura, Sonawar, Pir Bagh, Nadargunj, Chhanpura, Basant Bagh, Chhota Baza, Zaina Kadal, Zero bridge Mosque, Raj Bagh Mosque, Betamalu, Khrew, Bones and Joints Hospital at Burzula, S.M.H.S. Hospital, Institute of Medical Sciences and Saura, also Shah Hamdan Mosque and Eid Ghah. Everywhere large crowds awaited us varying between 350 to 5000 in numbers. They included women, adults and youth. We were also able to visit homes of Kashmiri Pundits and a few Sikh families who had decided to stay on in the valley.

One third of non-Muslim population is still in Srinagar. Shri Balraj Puri and Shri Inder Mohan met Shri Jagmohan, Governor of Jammu and Kashmir.

Other team members met CRPF chief of the valley. The team members had requested the offices of the Advisers to the Governor for arranging a meeting of the team members with the said advisers but there was no response.

Although our hotel proprietor was a Muslim he had employed a Hindu named Gautam of 22 years age hailing from Darjeeling. Pt. Jagan Nath, a Kashmiri Pandit, a resident of Srinagar, had met two of us in Delhi on 25.3.1990. Pt. Jagan Nath told us that there was communal harmony in the valley and those who were coming out had either overreacted to the situation or because of certain other reasons which could be winter, curfew and also closure of all institutes like banks, schools, post offices etc. The Muslims of Kashmir genuinely wanted Kashmiri Pandits to return to the valley. Not a single case of looting or arson of non-Muslims property had taken place. Regarding himself Pt. Jagan Nath said that he would be returning to the valley in the second week of April, 1990.

One of us, however met a number of non-Muslim businessmen at Delhi who had come from Srinagar and who complained that they had to close their shops and had come away. Some doctors also said to have come away. This matter needs further investigation.

Rajinder Singh, the taxi-driver, told the members of the team that certain interested elements were propagating that all those non-Muslims who migrated to Jammu or else-where would be provided with free plots, cash and other facilities. There was a deliberate attempt to communalise the situation by setting up relief camps outside the valley. According to Rajinder Singh when thousand of Sikhs were massacred in Delhi in November 1984 and hundreds of Muslims were killed due to communal riots in UP and Bihar, no relief camps were ever established in areas outside their towns, where they had been living. While there is not a single case of communal rioting in the valley, how come that the Governor, Mr. Jagmohan, has preferred to set up relief camps at a distance of 300 miles in Jammu.

The members of the team were also told of the grievance that while the non-Muslim who were in relief camps, were getting their

salaries but Muslim employees who were in the valley and could not attend their duties because of curfew were not receiving any payment. Similarly, the Governor has preferred to pay compensation to families of non-Muslim victims who were considered to be informers, but so far not a single penny had been paid to many more such Muslim families of the victims.

On 29th March, 1990, Mr. Pancholi himself heard on the Srinagar TV (which is relayed from Jammu) that curfew in Srinagar was relaxed only between 5.00 to 9.00 a.m but on the same evening, he heard from the National Programme News relayed from New Delhi that curfew was also relaxed in Srinagar between 6.00 and 10.00 p.m. which was wholly incorrect. Similarly, the local people maintained that news relayed regarding killing of terrorists by the para-military forces were either false or distorted. In events of indiscriminate firings by para-military forces, a pregnant woman, her 8 years old son, and the driver of the three wheeler in which they were travelling on the morning of 29th March, 1990 during curfew relaxation, were killed. They were deliberately combined with the news of terrorists being killed without mentioning the death of woman and her son etc., on the TV. That is how Indian media has lost its credibility.

One thing about which the local people are particularly sore is the permission granted to non-Muslim employees to leave duty and draw their minimum salary when they are not on duty.

The exodus of non-Muslims is widely regretted by the common man in Kashmir. But there have been some unexplained killings both of Muslims and non-Muslims. This coupled with the overall atmosphere of violence and insecurity has led to the exodus of large number of people and intensified the atmosphere of insecurity.

Another significant demand which came from one and all was that they wanted Kashmiri Pundit families to return to their homes. "We were all Kashmiris and we can guarantee better security to them than all the so-called security forces," they maintain.

The Kashmiri Muslims' contention is that their brethren Kashmiri Pundits are being evacuated under a conspiracy to communalise the situation in the valley in particular and outside too. According to them, Jammu Administration was creating panic among Pundits that there was going to be a massive house-hunting in coming operations of pro-Pak Militants.

Security forces will have to shoot down offenders and in such a melee it will be impossible to distinguish between Pundits and Muslims. For all this the people blame R.S.S., Vishw Hindu Parishad (VHP) and BJP. It is necessary to mention that whenever local papers appear, there is always an appeal on behalf of the mujahideen, particularly in Urdu Press, on the front page, requesting the Kashmiri Pundits to return to their valley. In this appeal the Muslims are warned against occupying or tampering with immovable property

belonging to Kashmiri Pundits. So far the local Muslims have lived up to what they say in this regard, and in quite a few cases, the keys of the houses belonging to Kashmiri Pundits are also left with them (the Muslim neighbours).

There are authentic reports from Jammu region as well that the local people, i.e. Dogras are getting restive by the presence of Kashmiri Pundits among them for such a long time. They resented fomentation of communal riots in Jammu City and blame the administration for not controlling the same in time, particularly when the Governor himself was there. Large sections of Jammu Hindus feel that Kashmiri Pundits can continue to live in the valley peacefully provided the Government wants it. The Jammu Hindus feel hurt by the escalating price of essential items and also of land and property by the arrival of Kashmiri Pundits in the city. Another factor to be taken into account is that of such news that there has been no repression in the valley or that steps taken by the Governor's administration and showing positive results are doctored news and cannot be taken even with a pinch of salt. All claims made by the Governor during his visits to Delhi and broadcast by the media to the effect that he is handling the difficult situation with utmost "love and compassion" are far from true.

ATROCITIES BY THE SECURITY FORCES

A large number of excesses were brought to our notice. Some of them are heart-rending.

In Anantnag which was visited by one member of the team, it was alleged that an injured person was brought to the door of a doctor for medical attention. Neither was the injured person allowed to enter the clinic nor was the doctor allowed to come out to attend to him with the result that he died.

On 29.3.1990 at about 8.30 a.m. (at a time when curfew was not in force) security forces fired without any provocation upon a three-wheeler and a Matador van. This led to several deaths including that of a pregnant woman and her 8-years old son. We visited the injured husband in the hospital and got the full story from him.

On 31.3.1990, a group of children in the age group 11-12 assembled at the house of a teacher to have tuition from him in Vicharnag locality of Srinagar. The teacher was non-Muslim and all students except one were also non-Muslims. There was an incident in the vicinity and the CRPF men burst into this house. The CRPF men asked the identity of the pupils with their names, only the Muslim boy was shot and killed.

Again on 1.4.1990 after a CRPF jawan of 77th Battalion was

killed, some of them sought revenge on uninvolved persons far away from where the incident had occurred. At 7.30 am on 1.4.1990 (when curfew had been relaxed) a CRPF ambulance fired in the locality of Navpura injuring five persons including two women. Subsequently one woman died. The other persons were three boys aged 15 to 17. The persons who tried to take injured to the hospital were beaten and arrested. One of them, Mr. Latif Ahmad, showed us the marks of beating all over his body, which he had received for helping the injured. We reached the scene of incident within three hours of its happening. We also found a 25 years old Fida Hussain with a bullet in his thigh but afraid to go to the hospital on account of being arrested or killed by the army. We ourselves took him to the hospital where we saw many people lying with bullet injuries.

On the same day when we were returning from Navpura to go to another area of incident we were stopped on the way in Gojwara Tulwara Mohallah where barely 15 minutes before the jawans of the 77th Battalion had gone berserk, entered various bouses and had beaten and manhandled the local people. We saw several persons lying in the houses with fresh injuries and were told that besides beating them, their cash was also looted by the security forces. The 69th battalion attached to that area did not even know what was happening. However, it did interfere later and prevented further violence on the local people.

The reports of such incidents were pouring in and we were asked to visit several places in order to see the continuous rampage going on. But due to paucity of time it was not possible for us to visit each and every place.

We met several injured persons in the hospitals. Ghulam Kadar from Brij Behera, a 20 year old person, while he was closing his shop during curfew relaxation at 8.30 am on 24.3.1990 was fired upon by the security forces, injuring his right hand. Shri Bashir Ahmad from the same place, a gardener in the state government garden department, was shot on 26.2.1990 at the Main Market. Nazir Ahmad was lying with an amputated leg from bullet injuries. He, a student of 9th class, was going to join a peaceful procession to be held at Charari Sharif, about 35 km from Pampur, in a truck with 40 persons on 22.2.1990. There was no curfew at that time. He told that he alongwith others was asked to get down by the security forces on the way, and despite "our pleas of being innocent, we were fired upon". Three persons, Farukh Ahmad (Driver), Manjur Ahmad and Ghulam Mustafa died on the spot. Five boys were injured.

Mr. Shahzada Mehmood from Saharanpur and working as a hawker in Gurwari Mohallah, Srinagar, nearly for the last 15 years, told us that he was shot at 9.30 pm in the waist by the CRPF without any provocation or warning.

Two victims of Anantnag were lying injured in the emergency

ward. We also saw victims of mini-bus shooting. Shri Shakil Ahmad, a second year student of S.P. College, has bullet injury in his thigh.

In fact, the hospitals were full of the injured persons and we were pressed by numerous relatives and friends of the said injured ones to come to the relevant bed and listen to the story of horror perpetrated by the security forces on them. However, we were told that neither any compensation was provided to any of the victims of the firing by the paramilitary forces nor the government had taken any care to investigate such incidents and reasons for such injuries. Nor any compensation was given to the families of those Muslims who were killed in firing by the security forces.

When some of these incidents were brought to the notice of senior officers, in certain cases they were acknowledged and in several other cases they did not even know. There appears to be no system whereby individuals who suffer can lodge complaints and seek redress.

Instances regarding molestation of women in Chhanpura were brought to the notice of the team members Mr. Balraj Puri and Inder Mohan who were taken to the house where two young girls were said to have been raped by the security forces. This was confirmed by the victimised girls themselves. The team members Mr. Balraj Puri and Inder Mohan were moved by the feelings of the family members and neighbours who were showing full respect and consideration to the girls.

It is not possible to list all the cases which were brought to our notice. But the broad pattern is clear. The militants stage stray incidents and the security forces retaliate. In this process large numbers of innocent people get manhandled, beaten up, molested and killed. In some cases the victims were caught in crossfire and in many more cases they were totally uninvolved and there was no crossfiring. This tends to alienate people further. The Muslims alleged that they are being killed and destroyed because they are Muslims.

Everywhere the people gave heart-rending accounts of how security forces were gunning down the innocent Muslims of the valley. During the seven or eight days the curfew had been relaxed, the unprecedented huge processions - peaceful and disciplined, were blocked by paramilitary forces at particular points by putting heavy vehicles on both ends. They resorted to merciless firings at random and killed many innocent persons. These accounts were given to us by the participants in all such localities where processions had been taken out and were brutally attacked by the security forces.

Unparalleled curfew

For more than three and a half months now, except for a break for a few days, the Srinagar city and other major towns have been under curfew by and large. It used to be relaxed at very odd hours, i.e. between 5 to 8 or 9 in the morning. Since 7th April to 19th April, 1990, there was practically no relaxation at all. Result is that the civil life is totally disrupted. Shops hardly open, banks, schools, courts etc., remain closed and no mail is delivered, nor are the government treasuries functioning. Traders cannot transport essential commodities and medical drugs due to curfew. The people in the valley neither have the cash nor the opportunity to be able to purchase anything. Mobility of people in the valley is almost at a standstill. Even during the curfew relaxation period for a few hours since 20th April, 1990, the vehicles are not permitted on the road. The people are not allowed even to carry their sick brethren to the hospitals. Wherever we went, slogans used to be raised: "We want anti-people curfew raj to be ended. Leave out our day-today necessities of life, we cannot purchase even white shroud for our dead victims. We did not find any government machinery involved in the supply of medicines or essential commodities to the people to mitigate the rigours of curfew. In fact, we found many persons reluctant to come out of their houses during curfew relaxation hours as they feared unprovoked firing on unarmed people by the security forces. People in the valley say: "There is more terrorism in Punjab than in Kashmir and a large number of people are killed there in comparison to Kashmir, but the government do not impose such a continuous curfew there! But the government is imposing this continuous curfew here because they want to punish the entire population and wishes to starve them."

Mr. Jagmohan in his Press Conference on 2nd April, is reported to have said that the present continuous curfew is imposed in order to prevent the people from coming together for organising peaceful processions and demonstrations, and also to tame them by reducing them to starvation level. The people bitterly resent the curfew and look upon it as a method of keeping them in virtual house-arrest.

Without meaning any disrespect to Jagmohan it is a fact (which he too must realise) that today he is the most despised person in the valley. All the journalists, eminent or otherwise, who have been showering high praises upon Jagmohan for his well "deserved popularity" in the valley are totally cut off from reality.

Total Alienation

Mr. Jagmohan, Governor of Jammu and Kashmir, in a Press conference at New Delhi on 2nd April, 1990, is reported to have asserted that the story of the alienation of the Kashmir valley people is "not correct" and that the people are 'terrified' presumably by the militants. This indicates that he is either out of touch with the Kashmir valley, which is hardly possible, or that he does not want the Indian people to know the truth. The fact is that the entire Muslim population of the Kashmir valley is wholly alienated from India and due to highly repressive policy pursued by the administration in recent months, especially since the advent of Shri Jagmohan in January 1990, their alienation has now turned into bitterness and anger. It would be very difficult to find in the majority community of the Kashmir valley anyone who does not passionately desire complete independence from India. Even local J and K police and the local administration stand completely alienated from the paramilitary forces on the one hand and the Government of Jagmohan on the other. The local government servants talked harshly about India having 'enslaved' Kashmir.

"We want freedom", "we want independence for ourselves, "we will never accept domination from Pakistan or India" - these slogans raised by women, youth and men conveyed their message loudly and clearly. Though deafening slogans were dinned into our ears where ever we went, yet we did not hear a single pro-Pakistan slogan. The reasons given for this alienation are: "India has not fulfilled its promises given to Kashmir people - has not honoured its commitment regarding UN resolution of 1948 by which it had agreed to the right of the Kashmiri people for 'plebiscite'. 'Why did Nehru agree to all this?' they ask. "Indian government had always rigged elections in Kashmir except in 1977 and has imposed pliable Chief Ministers on Jammu and Kashmir", and as to how the Indian Army has become the "Army of Occupation" and has been committing inhuman atrocities on the common people. Regarding the large amount of subsidies given to Kashmir by the central government, they (the people) told us that large sums of Indian money and subsidies were cornered by corrupt administration planted over them. They further added, "why does India spend crores and crores of rupees on defence and subsidies? Indian government should rather divert this money to mitigate poverty and starvation prevailing in various parts of India like Bihar, Utter Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh."

As regards dissolution of State Assembly, the people are not only indifferent but react with derision even at its mention. For them

the Assembly was a fraud played on them.

Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front, one of the leading organisations who have been spearheading the people's movement in the valley stands for independent Kashmir. It wants non-Muslim people of the State to join hands in the struggle for independence of the State as a whole unit (Pakistan occupied Kashmir included). The other leading group is Hizbul Muzahideen. It is reported that this organisation wants Kashmir to be merged with Pakistan. There are several other groups also. All these groups are now united in their fight against Indian government, and do not wish to discuss the question as to what would happen if Kashmir secedes from India i.e. whether it would be an independent Kashmir or it would merge in Pakistan. However, the majority of the people desire neither India nor Pakistan.

Militants' violence and human rights

The human rights organisations represented through our team maintained that the cruelty and violence on the part of the militants in the valley must be condemned by one and all. The kidnappings and killings of innocent persons like Prof. Mushirul Haque, Vice-Chancellor of the Kashmir University, his secretary Mr. Abdul Ghani and Shri G.L. Khera, General Manager, H.M.T. must be denounced by all. The militants by their violent activities are not only depriving the innocent persons of their civil liberties but also harming the cause of freedom and democracy in the valley. In fact, the militants are strengthening the repressive machinery of the state by their activities and are providing a semblance of justification to the government to assume more and more arbitrary powers. Ultimately the peaceful democratic people's movement alone can emerge victorious. When pointed out by some of our members that by the large all the people's movements in Soviet Republics, including Lithuania and in other Eastern European countries including Romania (where the previous government unleashed most barbaric repression) have been peaceful and non-violent and that could be considered as one major factor for their success, the people in the valley listened to this observation carefully. But they say that the government was not allowing peaceful processions and demonstrations and, therefore, the militants were gaining respectability in the eyes of the common people. They criticised violence on the part of the state which they said must come to an end to bring about non-violence. However, in our opinion, there is no justification for the militants to take the law into their own hands and we condemn all such attempts.

While we strongly condemn the murders of innocent persons

both of Hindus and Muslims, committed by the militants, we are entirely against any policy of combating private terrorism by recourse to State terrorism. Such a policy is both undemocratic as well as counter-productive. It results in alienating the entire people from the government and in adding to the number of militants. In opposing private terrorism, the State must always act within the law. It has ample powers to combat terrorism without transgressing the law.

Appendix 2

Kashmir Imprisoned

"Kashmir imprisoned is a Report written by a team of four Indian women - three of them Hindu - all members of the 'Committee for initiative on Kashmir'. It was published from New Delhi in July 1990, and is a sequel to an earlier report by men members of the same 'Committee'. The present Report from which extensive excerpts are being reproduced gives an even more detailed account of what India is doing in Kashmir.

The Committee For Initiative on Kashmir sent a team of four women in June 1990, to investigate into the impact of militarisation of the Kashmir Valley on the lives of the people there, especially the women.

We had earlier sent out a team of four men in the month of March, after the imposition of Governor's rule in Kashmir. Their report - India's Kashmir War - had focussed attention on the violation of Human Rights by the security forces and the role of the former Governor Mr. Jagmohan, in perpetrating state repression. The Governor has been changed. But the situation has further deteriorated since the last visit of our team.

Both the Muslim and the non-Muslim population are filled with fear and insecurity today. The new Governor lifted curfew in the first few days. However, within two weeks he reimposed it and soon there were talks about declaring the valley a "disturbed area" and giving the security forces even more of a free hand. Already the morale of the civil administration is low. The authority of the Jammu and

Kashmir police has been undermined, and there seems to be no curb or check on the wide scale abuse of power by the security and the armed forces.

Kashmiris have over the years lived in close proximity with the Indian armed forces. They have been witness to turbulent times and to three wars between India and Pakistan. However the people have never experienced military excesses except for occasional isolated incidents. The security forces were never looked down upon as "brute animals worse than the troops of Chenghiz Khan." In Kashmir where even eve-teasing was rare, every instance of molestation and rape sends shock waves throughout the valley. It cuts against the ethos of the Kashmiri society. Of all the atrocities committed by the security forces, the treatment of the Kashmiri women has embittered the people of the valley the most.

The Indian state seems to be totally oblivious of the logic of militarisation and its consequences. The Valley is virtually under army rule and the civil administration seems to be helpless in checking the lawlessness of the security forces which have resulted in untold human suffering and growing alienation of the people there. This has had serious repercussions on the officers of the Jammu and Kashmir government who soon after the killing on May 21 (when demonstrators carrying Maulvi Farooq's body were shot down) came out with a statement saying that the incident "brought shame to Indian democracy and left a scar on the psyche of Kashmir." They were joined by several senior officers of the Indian Administrative Service of the J & K cadres - both Kashmiris and non-Kashmiris - who in a letter addressed to the Governor complained that despite "frantic wireless messages from officers of the state police asking for instructions to be conveyed to the CRPF to desist from firing on the procession, "they were not heeded."

Our investigations show that the security forces in Kashmir had been given vast powers under notifications which had been kept secret. Enormous sums are being diverted for the militarisation of the Kashmir valley. The state government which is bankrupt, has an annual budget for this year of Rs. 12 crores, excluding temporary accommodation for the security forces. Since December 1989, more than 120 companies of the security forces have been deployed in the valley for internal security, in addition to units of the regular army

Ved Marwah, Advisor to the Governor, said in an interview with us that all "development activities in the valley have come to a grinding halt. Ultimately, development cannot be isolated from Law and Order. "On the growing expenditure of the security forces, he said:" "That is an expenditure we can do without, "adding: if possible."

Can this militarisation be justified in the name of crushing militants? The team went to four of the six districts in the valley -

(Pulwama, Baramulla, Kupwara and Srinagar) and spent some time in the refugee camps at Jammu. The refugees were full of fear and uncertainties with regard to the militants, and many people had lost their near ones to the bullets of the militants. But the suffering and terror let loose by the security forces damage the very foundation of secular democracy of India. The people feel powerless in the face of the might of the Indian security forces who are no longer hounding militants, but looking upon the entire Kashmiri people as enemies. The people of the valley asked us several times, "Have you come here out of concern for KASHMIR, or do you care about the anguish of the KASHMIRI people."

The team consisted of Premila Lewis, journalist, Nandita Haksar, advocate, Suhasini Mulay, Filmmaker and Sakina Hasan, former principal of the Nawakadal Women's College, Srinagar. This report has been prepared on the basis of findings during their tour of Jammu and Kashmir from June 8 to 15, 1990.

The Threat

We left Delhi on the night of the seventh of June and arrived in Jammu next morning. We spent the entire day visiting camps where the Hindus, Kashmiri Pandits and some Kashmiri Muslim refugees have been put up. The next day we left for the valley, where we spent a week recording the cases of human rights violations by the State.

We are often asked why we only record or focus on the violation of human rights by the State - extra judicial killings and torture is primarily concerned with crimes committed by the State and those who are entrusted with upholding the rule of law. Once the people are faced with large scale violence by the State they are further alienated from the State. History has taught us that State terrorism can never be an effective way to counter other kinds of terrorism.

At the same time, let us add that in the present report we have also referred to cases of violation of human rights by terrorists and compiled figures of terrorist killings. Wherever we went in the valley we found the people were tense and full of fear. A hint of a threat from the militants would result in the shopkeepers shutting their shops and people scouring homewards. The CRPF and the Border Security Forces Jawans also looked tense. Everyone seemed to have lost even their sense of honour. When one of us told the women security officers checking us at the Jammu airport that the two greasy looking cutlets in the Indian Airlines lunch box were two little bombs she was not amused? She slyly opened the napkin and prodded the cutlets.

The people in the Valley have never faced such a situation. As one woman said "Hame Fakr Tha Ki Hum depression Kya Hai Jante

Hi Nahi The.” (We were proud that we did not know what the word depression meant). Now she and the family sit tense within their homes during curfew. When they go out they feel scared and threatened.

One Christian teacher told us that anyone who was suspected of giving information on the whereabouts of the militants was immediately threatened. The person was made to present himself or herself in the local mosque and apologize. If the person stopped giving information they would be let alone. However, if the militants suspected that the persons were continuing to give information they would be shot dead. There are some militant groups who do not even bother to give any such warnings before shooting down people.

Another woman we met said she was living in a crowded locality in Srinagar with relatives. She too continued to wear a sari and go to work. She said she had moved in with relatives in another locality but she visited her old house and her Muslim neighbours looked after her house. This was something almost all the Kashmiri Pandits said that their Muslim neighbours had the keys to their houses. The Muslims we interviewed who had Pandit neighbours said with a certain degree of pride that they had the keys of the houses.

One Kashmiri Muslim family living in a middle class locality of Srinagar said they were most hurt when they saw their Pandit neighbours leave one day with military escort without informing them. This we heard again and again. The Pandits said that they did not fear their neighbours but there was no guarantee that outsiders would not attack them.

One school teacher who has not left the Valley said that in the night even if she heard mouse she was terrified. One hearing this her Christian colleague (married to a Muslim) gave her a spontaneous hug and said “you come to stay with us”.

The Media and The Killings

One of the major reasons for the widespread fear, threats and suspicion is lack of information. The media has been publishing reports on the plight of the Kashmiri Pandits who are living in the refugee camps but there are almost no reports of the fact that a similar number of Kashmiri Muslim families have also had to leave their homes in the Valley for the same or similar reasons. Official news of the Valley is relayed from Jammu and New Delhi. Radio Srinagar is located in Jammu and the ground reality of the valley seldom gets reflected in their news.

While the Press handouts state that the situation is getting under control and normalcy would soon be restored, in their attempt to

create that impression, they often tend to underplay the number of killings. The Government of Jammu & Kashmir has been giving Press release about seminars and workshops on horticulture, sports and environment. But there is seldom any attempt to inform the public in clear terms about how many people have been actually killed by the militants, and how many by the security forces and among these how many were Muslims and how many non-Muslims. An official hand-out giving figures was released in March 1990 at Jammu. The release said that 137 persons have died from January to March and denied the figures given by Mr. Saifuddin Soz, M.P. that 450 persons had been killed since Governors Rule in January to March.

A survey of about 20 daily newspapers in English, Urdu and Hindi revealed that the papers reported incidents in which 118 people had been killed in April, 1990 and in May the figure was 200 plus the number of persons killed during the Mirwaiz's funeral when the security forces fired on an unarmed funeral procession. The J & K police says the number of dead were 27, the J & K government admits 47 and unofficial sources state that nearly 70 died.

Many more persons have died in the Valley in June, 1990. But the exact figures are yet to be released by the Government. No one can deny that the situation is serious. But the question is whether militarisation is the solution?

The Government's Response

The Government of J & K under the Governor has responded to the complex political problem by appeals, awards, passing of extraordinary laws, giving vast powers to the security arrangements. This response resulted in an increasing number of persons falling victims to state violence, and a growing feeling in the valley that the people are living under army rule without protection of life or liberty.

By the time Shri Jagmohan was relieved of his post as Governor the morale of the J & K police had been seriously undermined. Meetings on plans to curb terrorism were no longer being held at the Police Control Room but were being held in the border Security Force Camps. The J & K police was labelled as terrorist and they were slowly replaced by the security forces. One official source told us that 250 Gypsies cars meant for the J & K Police were diverted to the CRPF. They were also supplied with SLR'S (Self Loading Rifles).

No one would give us exact figures on the number of units or the companies of the security forces that have been inducted into the Valley since January. A source in the police said that fifty companies of BSF, 110 companies of the CRPF, four companies of the ITBP and about 300 men of the National Security Guards, have been inducted into the Valley since January, 1990. However, this is an

underestimate since other paramilitary forces such as the Assam Rifles have been inducted. On January 24, 1990 the Governor announced that highly trained "initiative squads" had been organised to surprise and apprehend terrorists. He said 15 teams with 3 to 5 armed personnel in day to day clothes would go around in thirty vehicles especially sanctioned for these squads, whose main aim was to "look out for suspicious looking persons or groups of persons".

The logic of this militarisation is that now the State looks upon not only the J & K Police and local administration as terrorists, it begins to look upon the entire people as terrorists or potential terrorists. An atmosphere has been created where the terror of the militants is met with the terror of the Security Force and the people are caught in between.

For the officers in Government establishments, bank employees, technical staff of important industries, their normal working life has been replaced by a "life under siege." Some have been required to live in hostels attached to their working places. Others are escorted to their work place by security forces; the traffic cleared for them as they are taken to offices and back.

One of the most publicised effects of terrorism in the Valley has been the mass exodus of the Kashmiri Pandits and other Hindus from the Valley to Jammu and to Delhi. We visited three of the twenty-four camps being run by the government in Jammu, including the biggest tented camp at Jhiri, 18 km away from the city.

The fear that the Kashmiri Pandits are feeling is genuine, and no one can deny that the human suffering is also very real. However, the fact is that the only organisational help they get is from the virulently communal Hindu organisation which never had any base in the Valley. The RSS is in charge, and it has its own ways of working. For instance when we were at the Geeta Bhawan one of the women we interviewed, said that, "Kuchh nahin hua tha, sab bhag rahe the to hum bhi bhag aye." (Nothing happened to us. Everybody was running away, so also we came away). A man who overheard this shouted at her "What do you mean, 'nothing happened'? Didn't you hear the announcements from the mosques? Didn't you hear the slogans all night? Tell them that."

We intervened and told him that we wanted to talk to the women separately. He shrugged his shoulder and walked off. We then turned back and asked her whether she had been threatened from the mosques. She said "No." and then added "you better talk to the others. I don't know".

At the Jhiri camp, while we were interviewing the women the men came around our taxi and cross-examined us. Our guide reassured them that she was from the RSS. She told us that the men had told them not to speak to people. She whispered loud enough for

her to be heard by the men standing around., that some time back some JKLF women had come to the camp with poisoned food. They had learnt Dogri. When we asked whether they had come to the camp, she said no and could not specify when these women had come and from where. The JKLF incidentally does not have women members.

Many of the Kashmiri Pandits said they would like to go back. They were confused about the situation and their uncertainty about their future only fed their present fears, and insecurity. There was no secular organisation to help them overcome their terror, which we feared, was being directed into communal channels by the RSS and similar organisation which were organising relief work among them.

We were told by other reliable sources that the local people in Jammu were beginning to resent the presence of the refugees. So the BJP and Shiv Sena may no longer take up the cause of the refugees out of fear of losing their base in Jammu. The pressure of the Kashmiri Pandit refugees to return to the Valley may thus mount in the coming days.

We were happy to see however that in the Valley itself, communal harmony still survived in spite of the best efforts made to subvert it by some of the fundamentalist terrorist groups as well as by the partisan behaviour of the state's security forces. During our stay in Kashmir, we heard of the case of a Kashmiri Pandit Jiya Lal Raina, 50 years bachelor who died on June 11. Since most of his relatives, had earlier left for Jammu, there was no one to make arrangements for his funeral. The Muslim neighbours not only carried his body for the last rites, the local Imam of the mosque, Haji Ahmad Ali lit the pyre. The incident was reported the next day with pictures in the Kashmir Times.

Governor's Rule

Since the imposition of Governor's rule in Kashmir, the security forces have been given vast powers to search, seize and arrest. Even non-commissioned officers and sub-inspectors of the Border Security Forces have been armed with power to break open doors and windows and even enter the 'zenana' and arrest persons without warrant. Those powers have been given under a notification issued by the Home Department of the Government of Jammu and Kashmir.

The notification, dated April 2, 1990 signed by the Additional Chief Secretary (Home) is valid for ninety days.

We were told about this notice by a Deputy Commissioner who said he had heard that such a notification had been issued but he had not got a copy. We asked various lawyers, former Judge, journalists

and senior bureaucrats and all of them said that they were keen to see the notice but it was impossible to get copy. Even journalists were apparently kept in the dark about the exact nature of powers given to the BSF. As evident from the discrepancies in their reports, The Times of India of May 2, with Jammu dateline reported that the BSF were yet to get powers to "search and seize" while "Quami Awaz" of the same date said that the BSF had already been given the powers.

A senior bureaucrat in the Home Department told us that it was a "secret document." He said he did not wish to give it to us because he felt "you" will write against "us".

It was with great difficulty we procured a copy of the notification. This secret notification gives all the powers enjoyed by the police under Chapter five of the Kashmir Criminal Procedure Code to Junior officers of the Border Security Force and the Army.

If you visit Srinagar city in the summer, you will be able to get accommodation, a place in the flat or even reserve a taxi easily. This year the hotels have been reserved by the State for the security forces. As more and more companies arrive they take over hotels, houses and other public buildings. The houseboats are vacant and shikaras on the famous Dal Lake have no work.

The streets are full of blue Gypsies running in all directions carrying the Jawans. There are some which carry the National Security Guards in their common uniforms. The men behind the barriers, check posts and the security bars in the public buildings like the banks and the Secretariat are tense. Roads leading outside Srinagar see buses being stopped and passengers being lined up for several hours of checking. We saw two men and one pregnant woman for delivery being stopped and checked.

At about the time we were there some part or the other in the city was under curfew. By five all shops are closed and by six Srinagar was a desert. There is no aspect of life, not affected by the militants and the security forces.

"Normalcy" - Fact or Fiction?

The Secretariat is under siege. It is guarded by very tense looking security personnel and everyone coming to the Secretariat is checked twice and have to go through an elaborate security arrangement. The Secretariat functions from nine in the morning to four in the evening. Despite official claims of normalcy most departments are paralysed because the staff does not come regularly. Either a militant group gives a call for a civil curfew or there is a bomb blast and firing making it difficult for the staff to attend regularly. At other times curfew is imposed by the authorities.

The Tourist Reception Centre (TRC) which used to be the hub

of

the tourist activities has become a high security residential hostel for the non-Kashmiri Government servants. It has four watch towers guarded round the clock and flood-lights that light up the large lawns. The officers are ferried back and forth from their offices by well-guarded buses. Once the officers get back from work they do not venture out again.

The three advisers to the Governor are escorted with jeeps rustling with machine toting security guards, The senior bureaucrats have armed escorts in their cars.

All these people have been given security instructions by the Additional Director-General of Police.

On the 16th May, 1990, the Home Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed told the Rajya Sabha that 106 officers in Jammu and Kashmir had been sacked for "being sympathetic to the cause of the separatist movement". When Mr. N. Salaria M.P. asked whether any explanation from the officers was called for before dismissing them the Home Minister said that there was "no question of seeking any explanation when people had been found crossing the border to get training in subversive activities".

This had very serious repercussion on the other officers of Jammu and Kashmir. On 21 May, 1990, after the massacre by the CRPF (at the funeral procession of Mirwaiz Maulvi Farooq) they reacted by bringing out a statement addressed to the 'Citizens of the World' where they said that this incident had driven them to come out with a statement, signed by 137 officers of the Government Jammu and Kashmir. They said that the incident had "brought shame to Indian democracy and left a scar on the psyche of Kashmir which would never be removed".

They condemned the killings in other places in the past five months (January - May, 1990) and said that the killings in "Gowakadal, Zakura, Tangpora, Hawal, Lal Chowk, Handware, Baderwah, Bandipora, and Anantnag are no longer names (of places) but knells that remind one of the firing exercise by the paramilitary forces that have taken a collective toll of many people."

About the condition of the administration they said "Hundreds of civil servants have lost their jobs without under going the formality of even an enquiry. Many of them are imprisoned. Doctors have been pushed into a strike at a time when when they are needed the most by the society. Their persecution continues while they are deliberately prevented from treating the sick/injured."

They finally appealed to "the peace loving world to persuade Indian government to respect the genuine aspirations of the people of Kashmir, put an end to the repressive measures and adopt pragmatic approach towards this serious problem."

One June 5, 1990, the government retaliated by serving a show

cause notice on the signatories of this statement. According to the government their issuing the statement constituted a "misconduct." Instead of intimidating the officers, the government action further rallied them together against the government. The list of the signatories, to the statement grew from the original 137 to 1000. Today it stands at 10,000.

As most of the senior bureaucrats are 'Indian', the Kashmiris do not go to them for redressal of their grievances. The middle level officers by and large tend to be Kashmiri Hindus, a majority of whom have left the valley. Therefore institutions, like the Postal Department and banks are still not functioning normally.

The local officers are treated with suspicion by the government as in the local police; because they are suspected to be "sympathisers" of the militants. The people do go to them for redressal, but they are helpless.

The same sense of helplessness is felt by professionals like the lawyers and the doctors practising in the valley. There is an increase in the number of cases of people arrested under TADA (the Terrorist and Destructive Activities Prevention Act). The sessions court in Srinagar had been the designated court. On Sunday May 1, 1990 the then Governor Jagmohan decided that the designated court at Srinagar shall be abolished leaving the operative designated court in Jammu, a good 12 hours by bus from Srinagar.

On June 4, 1990, the lawyers of Jammu and Kashmir High Court Bar Association went on an indefinite strike, in protest against the alleged "violation of human rights by security forces" and denial of legal relief to the people.

On June 11, the police arrested 32 lawyers who took out a procession in violation of prohibitory orders demanding the right of self-determination for the people of Jammu and Kashmir. They also protested against the arrest of colleague whose whereabouts are not yet known. These lawyers were later joined by doctors from major hospitals in the valley. The courts are not functioning and all legal work has come to a standstill. When we left the valley on June 15, the strike was still continuing.

The women lawyers told us about the treatment meted out to women. They said that women were threatened, humiliated and sexually abused.

"BSF tell us to say 'Jai Mata Ki' and threaten to take the girls to Delhi and make them prostitutes or to take them to mandirs (temples) and put tilak on them. Is this secularism?" Women asked us.

They said to us: "Ma'am we only want one thing now. We want our freedom. We cannot bear this any longer. If we can't be free we'd rather die than suffer this oppression. Even the Nazis couldn't have done what is being done to us". (This was a common refrain which we

heard everywhere we went).

Others said: "The framework of this constitution is not acceptable. We don't believe in this constitution. We have been cheated by it".

On May 7, 1990 the doctors and hospital workers went on a strike at eight major hospitals in Srinagar, when one of their colleagues, Dr. Mohammad Rafi, was arrested by security force while on duty at the SMHS Hospital. The doctors claimed that they had not been told on what charges Dr. Rafi had been arrested. On May 18 they discovered that four more of their colleagues and an ambulance driver had been arrested. They were apparently being charged with treating militants.

The doctors at various hospitals in the valley were being "victimised" for having treated the injured militants. "In view of their medical ethics" the doctors said that they treated every injured person. "They did not concern themselves with the private non-medical aspects of their patients." They were bound by the Hippocrates oath.

A few days later the doctors went back to work. But they were constantly harassed by the security forces. They went back on an indefinite strike on May 26.

On June 11 about 100 agitating doctors joined the striking lawyers. They issued a Press note and spoke about the extreme conditions of work.

"Doctors were ordered out of ambulances, searched, abused and physically beaten." There are many instances where curfew passes were torn on their faces.

A Superintendent of Police said that the local police is not trusted, in fact the previous Governor had said that 50% of the local police were sympathisers of the militants. The officer said that they were professionals as much as anybody else but "just because we are born in one part of the country and belong to one community, we are suspect. This is what hurts us the most."

Before Governor's rule was imposed it was the J & K Police which had made the arrests of militants and recovered arms. At the time the Governor had offered many incentives and awards to the police. As a senior police officer told us, the local police recognise the militants. The security forces personnel are outsiders and cannot be effective without the help of the police.

However, the authority of the J & K Police has been seriously undermined, making them ineffective. There have been instances when they have tried to check the abuse of power by the security forces but have been beaten by them. There are several instances when the CRPF has deliberately acted contrary to the instructions of the local police and unwarranted killings took place. In Rainawari, Srinagar, the CRPF picket mounted outside the Vishwa Bharati

Women's Welfare Institute was attacked by the militants on 4th June, 1990. They hurled a hand grenade. After the militants had left, the CRPF forced entry into the nearby houses opened fire and shot two people dead. This was in spite the local police telling them that the militants did not belong to that area.

This situation has been deteriorating. One June 9, 1990, a cordon and search operation was again mounted in Rainwari. One family panicked and locked themselves into one room. The CRPF knocked, and opened fire through the door killing one child. The family went to the police station to file an FIR. The local police station was under instructions not to file any FIR or register any case against the security forces. The SHO, however, noted the event in the Daily Diary kept at the station.

The People

During the course of our investigations we spoke to many ordinary people such as farmers, artisans, clerks etc. What was very disturbing was the casualness with which the security forces could perpetrate violence.

The security forces were allowed to terrorise the people with impunity. The people were never sure which action of their would bring down the wrath of the security forces.

Razak Malik, a farmer in Trehgam, Kupara District, went to cultivate his field on May 25, 1990. The army soldiers put his head under water and held it down. They kicked him saying that he should not be wandering outside his home.

We met Mr. Mohammad Shafi Baba at the office of a journalist. His head was bandaged and arm in a sling. He had come there hoping for a lift home as the journalist and he lived in the same area. Moh'd Shafi was going by bicycle to attend his duty in the morning at 8 a.m. on June 12, 1990. He is a Switch-board Operator in the Power Development Department posted at Rawalpura. He was stopped at the CRPF Gojwara check post near the Jama Masjid Police Station. He showed his curfew pass No. 015046, issued on 10.5.90 and valid for the month of May and June. He also showed his I.D. Card with an attached photo stating clearly that he was a Switchboard Operator in the Power Development Department, Rawalpura. For no reason the CRPF Jawans started beating him with sticks. They hit him on the arms and legs with rifle butts. He left his cycle and tiffin box behind and ran into the police station.

The local police dropped him off in the city centre at Lal Chowk. He took an auto-rikshaw and went to the government Hospital for bone and joint surgery in Burzalle Srinagar for treatment.

His job in the Power Department is considered to be an essential

service and action can be taken against him under the Essential Services Maintenance Act if he fails to report for duty. He told us that the Power Department is severely under staffed and the Executive Engineer takes a stern view if people do not report for duty.

Ghulam Hasan Mohju - 65. He has a shop in Bagh-e-Islam. When a member of our team met him on June 11, 1990, he was still in bandages. He told us about the search of his house and the subsequent torture by the CRPF.

"The CRPF surrounded my house between 3 a.m. and 4 a.m. on June 2. They searched the house, my wife, five daughters, one-year old son and a crippled servant also". The CRPF arrested him, blind folded him, tied his hands behind his back and took him to the Doabgah Interrogation Centre in Sopore about 50 kms from Srinagar. They demanded that he give up his weapons and accused him: "Mujahideen (Militants) come to you." I told them I have nothing. They took him to another rooms stripped him naked, hung him by his hands and beat him with sticks. "I could tell them nothing." He was then laid on his stomach, spread eagle, one soldier stepped on each hand, shoulders and neck with their boots on. He was hit with their canvas belts, that have brass buckles. "I could tell them nothing because I knew nothing. I told them, 'Spare me, I am an old man.' He became unconscious. When he came round he was untied and given water and food. the beating started again "when I was almost finished, they rested me for half an hour. Then hung me up again, feet tied and beat my feet with iron rods till the blood ran out. I was left hanging and naked all night. Next day it started again. Now they put chilli powder in may eyes, mouth, nose, anus and private part. I begged them to take my money and buy the weapons they said I was hiding."

On the third day of torture his stool was black. They told him that they would beat him till he died. "Finally in desperation, I told them I had two sacks full of weapons - but first they must call me a doctor. The doctor came and some medication was provided. When he was asked about the weapons he said that he had lied to save his life. "Again the beatings started. Again I said, "Yes I have weapons" and fell unconscious. A three-star officer came in and I told him "If I tell you lies you stop and at the truth you beat me" Then they made him wear a uniform. He was put in a jeep and was brought back to Baramulla around 5 a.m. They dug the grounds and searched his house, and took him back. Again the beatings started. Then they hand-cuffed me and threw me in a rubbish heap thinking that I was dead. Two days later finding me still alive they took me to Sopore Police Station and left me there".

Historically the position of Kashmiri women was in many ways better than her counterpart in other part of the country. Traditionally the Kashmiri women had enjoyed a certain freedom in society. She

had wielded power, exercised responsibility and enjoyed a high status in society till the end of the 13th century.

According to a research by a Kashmiri woman scholar, Momeen Jaan, in the beginning of the 14th century, some of the powerful Muslim rulers introduced the system of purdah. The upper class Muslim women began to practise the Purdah and the upper class Hindu women followed suit.

The introduction of the purdah according to her signalled a decline in the status of the women who began to be confined to their houses. A great blow was dealt by the Afghan rulers who would humiliate and molest Kashmiri women. Some went as far as to ship them off to Afghanistan as presents for their friends. Under those conditions purdah began to be practised more vigorously. The rights of peasant and lower class women were severely curtailed. In spite of this history, the peasant and lower class women protested stoutly against the purdah and ultimately rejected it. The women in the middle ages fought for their right of free movement and self-expression. It is during this period that famous poetesses like Lalladed, Arnimal, Habba Khatoon and Fatima emerged from the peasantry and the lower middle classes.

Women slowly began to come to the fore in the war for independence from the Dogra regime. In May 1946 Sheikh Abdullah gave a call for Quit Kashmir. Women like Noor Gujri, a milkman's daughter and Fatima - who was killed by the Dogra Army, became famous for their militancy. After independence from colonial rule the constitution of Jammu and Kashmir recognised the special rights for women.

The women in Jammu and Kashmir have been given equality in law, equal opportunities in employment, education and development.

There is no exhaustive record of the human rights violations of women but the four case studies given below will give an idea of the sadistic impulses as well as of the aggressive Hindu communal and anti-muslim bias of the security forces which have been deployed in the valley.

Village Panzgam, Pulwama District

This is a village with a population of about 5,000 people. About five years ago a division of the Jammu and Kashmir Light Infantry bought 640 Kanals of land (8 Kanals - one acre) and gave adequate compensation to the owners. The villagers did not know the exact number of Jawans or the name of the officer in charge. They said that they had nothing to do with the unit and they had no complaint

against the unit till the incident of May 28, 1990. On that day some children chalked the words JKLF on the wall of two shops. At around eleven a.m. the Jk Light Infantry along with an additional 100 men in one tonner, one Shaktiman and one Gypsy trooped into the village. They did a flag march through the villages and on the way they beat up anyone they came across. Several men were severely injured and four of them were still in the hospital on June 12, 1990 the day we went to the Village. They are: Abdul Qayyun Batt, aged 14, Mohammad Ameen, aged about 20, who's leg was deliberately broken, Ghulam Mohammad Khannde, aged about 30 and Ali Mohammad Dar, aged about 18.

The security forces broke the wooden doors of the shops, beat up the shopkeepers and searched six houses where they broke open doors windows and mixed rice with kerosene and the milk with bhoosa. They asked for a woman school teacher but the villagers hid her.

The second incident occurred in the village on the May 29 1990. the farmers were going to the fields in the late afternoon, as the village Panzgam gets a share of its water rights only in the afternoon and it is the transplanting season for paddy. The J & K Light Infantry men caught them and hung Ghulam Mohammad Dar (50), Abdul Razaq Wanbi (55) and two boys Javed Ahmad Dar (12) and Mohammad Ashraf Dar (10) upside down from a tree for three and half hours. They were let off only after the village elders intervened.

Rahamti, wife of Abdul Ghani Dar aged 30 years. On the day of the incident, the army men came and asked her to accompany them in the search. They made her pull up her pheran and put a rifle on her breasts and began to beat her. She was four months pregnant. They searched the house and threw the household goods outside.

Muglee, widow of Ghulam Mohid Dar, said she has four sons and one daughter. The older sons were in the fields at he time and the younger two sons were at home with her daughter who is one year old.

Six army men came to search the house. She was caught by neck and pulled inside the house. She resisted and began shouting. The older son who is fourteen tried to intervene. He was beaten and tied to a tree. The army then proceeded to search the house and threw the household goods outside. She ran away.

Raja, wife of Ghulam Ahmad Dar aged 22 years. She has four daughters and one son. At the time of the incident she was at home with the youngest daughter and son. The older girls had run away on seeing the army. Her husband was in the fields. Seven army men came and broke open the windows from the outside and entered the house without knocking on the door. They caught her by the arms and pulled her upstairs. She put on the lights which they put off, and began to molest her. She started shouting and tried to run away. She

was thrown on the ground. Her children started crying. She picked them up and ran from the house. After she left, the army searched the house.

Shameema, wife of Ali Mohammad Mizgar alias Khan. Two army men came and took Ali Mohammad away and tied him to a tree in front of the village shop. Then four army men came back. Two of them took her into the house to conduct the search. Two men stood outside the house. As soon as he went in she was knocked down by them. One put a rifle on her chest and the other began to molest her. She resisted and began to shout. They forced her to go into the living room and open the cupboards. Before she could do that they knocked her down again. A neighbour's ten year old was sleeping. He was thrown out of the house. They tore her shilwar and put a hanky on her mouth to stop her from shouting and raped her. She lost consciousness. The husband came back and discovered her in this state.

Next day on the June 10 two elders of the village committee Mohammad Abdullah Dar and Ghulam Mohammad went to report the incident to the Deputy Commissioner.

The camp commander did not have an answer, and assured the DC and DSP that the three men involved in the rape had been "shifted" to another place.

Kupwara Town

Kupwara is the last town on the border and is a district headquarter approximately 90 kms from Srinagar. Kupwara falls within the 5 km security belt near the actual line of Control with Pakistan. There are as many as six Army Headquarters in the District. They are Dragmulla, Trehgam, Chowkibal, Kenan, Kannali and Kupwara. The people of this area have been used to army presence since 1947.

There has been a spate of migrations from the border villages. On June 11, 1990, when we visited the town of Kupwara, we learned that there had been a cordon and search operation the night before in parts of the town. There was a hartal against this and all shops were closed. We went to one area called Malik Mohammad and interviewed a few men and women.

They said that on 10th and 11th night some of them were awake watching a football World Cup when at 12.55 midnight they heard a bomb explosion, followed by firing which lasted for about 20 minutes. Soon after this the army began a cordon and search operation. We spoke to the residents of one area called the Malik Mohalls with a population of 300 people. The army surrounded the area and asked the men and boys to collect on the main road. They

then went back to search the houses which had women and girls in them. They beat up the women and swore at them asking where the militants were.

Abdul Majid Mullik aged 20 years is the son of Ghulam Rasool Mullik. The four people in the house. Abdul Majid Hanifa (20), Bawa (20-22), Ghulam Muglai Bawa (20) Ghulam Mohdeen MULLik, are all blind.

When the army men saw the boys in the house, they got very angry and began to beat them up with their guns. One of them put a gun in Abdul Majid's eye saying that he was pretending to be blind but was actually a Pakistani agent. They ransacked the house and left.

Rafiqua is the 22-years wife of Abdul Ahmad Malik. The army came around 1.30 in the morning and herded the men out, the women were shut inside. The army came inside and beat all the three women. Rafiqua's sister-in-law is 18 years old and six months pregnant. She was also beaten. Rafiqua was beaten so hard that her cheeks were black and blue. She also had scratch marks on them.

The family runs a poultry. There was Rs. 4000/- which they owed to various people. This was also taken.

Sabah is the 15 year daughter of Snawala Mir, four or five army men entered the room. They twisted her hand and caught her by the hair. One of them put a gun in her mouth and asked her where the firing was coming from. She said she didn't know. They began to beat her and she shouted. Her mother, Raja, pulled her away. Three army men began to molest Sameena. They asked her to open 'naada'. She resisted. They pointed the gun at her chest. She was raped. They took a gold ring, necklace and bangles.

Ayesha is 29-30 years old. She has four girls and one boy four year old. Three army men attempted to rape her. She ran out of the house on to the verandah and appealed to the army officer for help. The officer told her to remain inside the house and threatened to beat the husband if she made a noise. She was molested and her husband's watch was taken by the army men.

Nasreen daughter-in-law of Abdul Nabi Malik who works as a 'Harkar' (delivery peon) in the Post Office at Kupwara. She came out of the house with the man. She was taken into the house and asked to get into the bed. She started protesting. Her father-in-law Abdul Nabi ran in to save her. They beat him with sticks on the forehead and he was thrown out.

She was molested, they made her raise her pheran. Her breasts and thighs were pressed. She was caught by the neck and pressed into the bed.

Haji Aziaza Begum was asleep when the army came to their house around four in the morning. There was a knock on the door and her son Ghulam Mohammad opened the door. About 15 men

with SLRs entered the room. Some of them took the men outside. One army man asked her what was inside her pheran. She told them that she was nine months pregnant but they insisted that she had hidden something inside.

They asked her to undress. She refused. They lifted her pheran and began poking her stomach with Rifles asking her what was inside. Her three year old daughter came to her crying. She was pushed away. They kept asking her to open her clothes, pinched her cheeks, caught her by the hair and beat her. She fainted.

Mehmooda is aged 15 years, daughter of Ghulam Rasool Khan watch-maker.

The army came to their house on top of a shop and took her father away. She was left alone. She locked the door from inside. An hour later, five army Jawans came, they broke the door open and grabbed her clothes. She ran away from them and jumped out of the window and injured her ankles. She fainted. The relations suspect that she had broken her ankle, but nothing could be done as the town was under curfew.

All the people complained that the army had molested their women-folk and taken money and valuables from the house.

Tasneef Pani a 24 year young man whose father is a retired professor and an old National Conference worker. Tasneef is a B.Sc. final student at the S.P. College, Srinagar .

Tasneef and his younger brother Owais - aged 20 years, were picked up on April 30, 1990. It was the month of Ramazan and the brothers were awake early in the morning for "Sehri". The army came in three jeeps and one truck along with a women squad to their house in Srinagar.

Both the boys were blind folded and taken to the old Airport Interrogation Centre. Here they were severely beaten. The younger brother was interrogated about the activities of the older brother. From their questions, Owais realised that they were questioning him in connection with the killing of Mr. Khera, the Managing Director H.M.T. watch factory, who had been killed by the militants a few days earlier.

Owais and Tasneef were tortured and interrogated for three days. Owais was again blind folded and dropped off at Chashm-e-Shahi on the Dal Lake. Tasneef was then transferred to the Hari Niwas Interrogation Centre. Here he was further tortured. He was stripped naked, given electric shocks on his body, and cigarette butts were pressed into his Fingers.

This interrogation continued for days together. He was released on 31.5.90. Tasneef has still not recovered. He is unable to speak coherently and his speech slurs as he talks. Usually he keeps very quiet.

Batmaloo is an area in the heart of the city of Srinagar. We went

there on the June 10, 1990. There had been cordon and search raids in this area just the day before.

All entry points into Batmaloo were heavily guarded. The CRPF Jawans were standing in two's at every turn and corner with their guns on the ready, and their fingers on the trigger. The people however were moving around quite freely. None of the women in Batmaloo had burqas, or chadars on.

As soon as we went to Batmaloo, the people came out, anxious to talk to us. Some questioned us closely about our bonafides. When we told them that we had been sent by certain journalists, they double checked with our taxi driver and were satisfied. But we were not threatened or dealt with in a hostile manner.

The people complained that every few days the security forces (they could not be identified) mounted cordon and search operations. Here are some of their comments:

"They burst into the houses from the roof in the dead of the night, kick our things around, smash up our things, tear the clothing off the women, clutch our breasts, pinch our cheeks and things pretending to search us. They take away the young boys and men and then charge them with being terrorists. They take away our money jewelery and such things."

"They have branded everybody as a Pakistani. We have all been stamped with this." On June 9 the women took out a procession protesting against the arrest of three people, early in the morning of the same day. They demanded that these "uncalled for house searches must stop. They must stop night searches and stop taking our small children as terrorists." They were surrounded by the security forces, hit by rifle butts and forced to turn back. The shops remained closed. Mr. Mahmood Sultan - Works in the Food and Civil Supplies Department, Srinagar. His 21 years old son Parvez Sultan was picked up on May 21, 1990. The boy had just finished his High School examination. There is no news of him to date despite repeated requests to Mr. Jameel Qureshi (advisor) in charge of Home to the Governor Jammu and Kashmir.

One May 24, 1990, there was raid by the 141 Battalion of the BSF at 2.50 p.m. under Mukesh Chauhan. About 200 men in 5 trucks and 2 buses covered the area. Fifty of these men entered the house. Mainmoona, who is certified as a hereditary spastic paraplegic (she is completely crippled and cannot move at all) was in the bathroom being washed.

They picked her up and threw her on to the floor, and walked over her with their boots, and kicked her. Her brother showed them her medical certificate and begged them to stop no avail. The people in the house, her brother Ghulam Kadir and Ghulam Rasool Meni were also present. The BSF began to slap and rough up Mr. Kadir (55), who was also unwell. They threw his medicines out and began to

ransack the house. They broke the furniture, cupboards and stole Rs. 1928/-. They tore up documents, broke the VCR and cassettes. An FIR has been lodged at the Batmaloo Police Station.

Aza Begum, aged 30 years, wife of Ghulam Rasool Mir a mason, said their house in the Dianwari area of Batmaloo was raided on the night of June 6-7, 1990. The BSF was inside the house for one hour. Aza Begum was alone with her 3 children aged 11, 7 and 4 years. Four Jawans at a time entered the house. Her pheran was torn, mouth gagged. The house was ransacked. The police are looking for her husband.

Mohammad Ashraf Dar said his house is also in Dianwari area. It was raided on June 8-9, 1990. Their two sons and one daughter was arrested, their glass panes were broken and house ransacked.

As we were leaving the area we were surrounded by girls and women shouting "we want Azadi". Two mulahs tried to make speeches saying that they either wanted Pakistan or Azadi, but the people shouted them down saying. "No Pakistan" "We want Azadi, only Azadi".

Baramulla

Baramulla is a district headquarters 58 kms from Srinagar. The border town of Uri is another 40 kms from it. Uri lies in the 5 Kms security belt and now-a-days needs permit issued by the Special Commissioner (law and order) who sits at Baramulla.

When a member of our team visited his office on 11th June, 1990, the Special Commissioner was not there, but several people were waiting outside his office. These people had come to enquire about their missing relatives. They had been coming daily from their villages, sometimes for weeks on end. Following is what was reported to us by:-

Rehmat Jaan of Sheri village, 5 kms from Uri is the mother of Javed, an 18 years old bus conductor. She was picked up 31 days before (May 20) and since then there was no information about her to date. She has one more son, who is mad.

Amawani from Vatra village, 15 kms from Baramulla on the Handwara Road is the father of Abdul Majid aged 19 years. The army had conducted combing operations in the village on the May 10, 1990. They took away 3 boys. Two were subsequently released but not Abdul Majid. There was no news of him till the day we interviewed him.

Peer Gyasuddin from Baramulla town said his nephew was a police driver posted in Uri. He was shot at by militants inside the Uri Police Station on March 1, 1989. He was wounded in the leg and was

being treated in Baramulla. On May 23-24, 1990, he was picked up by the CRPF from his house in Baramulla. They refused to listen to his pleas, ignored his wounded leg, and threw him into a truck and took him away to Uri. He is still in CRPF custody.

Mowgli Begum, widow (45) of Sheri village, near Uri said her only son Mohammad Ashraf Sheikh, aged 16 years, was beaten and thrown into the river on April 29, 1990, when an army crackdown had taken place in their village. There is no trace of him.

Zahoor Ahmad Mullick, aged 13 years, of Kitchema village, Uri, was branded with knives when the army borrowed a stove from his family, heated knives on it and branded him.

Hajra Begum is widow of Nadihal village in the district of Baramulla. On May 10, 1990, the army had a crackdown in their village and took away her 16-years old son Ghulam Nabi. He was a student of 9th class. He has not returned. Hajrah is left with 5 small children. There is no one to till the land.

Kanthabagh

A member of the team went to Kanthabagh where there had been an operation by the armed forces in April, 1990. On the night April 24-25, 1990, three days before Eid, the security forces woke up, and after Shri, the men and boys went to the mosque to offer prayers.

They were all rounded up and their hands were tied behind their backs. Everybody was severely beaten. Their houses were overrun, their gardens and furniture smashed, the women were also pulled out and beaten. Many were stripped naked and tied with ropes.

Mahbooba Shah, wife of Abdul Saleem, a teacher, was pulled out of her house, stripped naked in public and beaten on every part of her body. Even her breasts were held out and struck repeatedly. She had to be hospitalised at the Saura Medical Institute, Srinagar.

Abdul Ahmed Soofi, a baker, had 5 young children. He wakes up at 3 a.m. to begin kneading the dough, and continues till 9 p.m. everyday in his bakery. He says he has not time for militants or politics. On the night (April 24-25) the army picked him up at random along with 49 others. They were made to eat faeces and drink urine in public. They were then taken to Vanigaon Army Camp in Pattan and held for 10 days. They were tortured continuously. They were beaten, and chilli powder and petrol were rubbed into their eyes and body. In the cold, they were kept naked throughout blind folded, and their hands tied behind their backs.

They were made to drink urine when thirsty, and this continued through the two days of Ramzan and Eid - when they were made to suck a man's genitals as well.

Conclusion

Our report has focussed on the widespread violation of human rights of the people of the Valley. The security forces continue to be used for internal security duty and as there is no check on their abuse of power by the civil authority, there will be no possibility of arriving at a real solution to the problem.

The security forces are being used by the State (this includes the Centre and the Government of Jammu and Kashmir) as instruments of terror as a part of a deliberate policy to terrorise the Kashmiri people into submission. It began with a crackdown on the militants and is fast becoming a policy of brutal suppression of the entire Kashmiri people. The people of the Valley are now living under virtual military rule. There seems to be a deliberate attempt to make women the primary target of attack by the security forces. The manner in which searches and interrogations are conducted smacks of a planned strategy to break the morale of the people.

It is true that the people of the Valley feel a deep sense of Kashmiri nationalism. But this is not a new feeling. One of our team members who had been in Kashmir for many years in the 1950s and 1960s says that the Kashmiris always referred to everyone else as Indians. Even other Indian Muslims were seen as "Hindustani". Another team member pointed out that in her genealogy kept by the Kashmiri Pandas at Matten it clearly said such and such ancestor Hindustan gaya. This Kashmiri nationalism was not antagonistic to Indian nationalism. But the history of Kashmiris struggle for independence is different from the rest of India. It is this difference that New Delhi has viewed with suspicion leading the Centre to brand the Kashmiris as "anti-national", "Pro-Pakistani" "cowards" and "fundamentalists." During our stay we were constantly told by the people that they felt helpless in the face of the repression perpetrated by the Centre. They turned to the only force that responded to their need - the militants. It is not the identification with the militants, but the absence of all constitutional avenues that has created this situation. The desire for 'Azadi' is no longer an expression of protest but an affirmation of their humanity and the desire to chalk their own future. The Kashmiri is no longer "alienated" from the rest of India, but sees the future in 'Azadi'.

In this complex psychological and political situation the people of the Valley have turned to Islam in search of a philosophy that comforts and binds them. This turning to Islam is as much a mark of protest as a reaffirmation of their identity as a nation. If the rest of the country views their protest as a rise of fundamentalist, Pro-Pakistani sentiment alone, then we as Indians have misunderstood the very

essence of a secular people. The fact that there have never been any communal riots in the Valley not even during partition is proof enough. But the molestation of women, the mistrust shown by the government, the open display of communal bias by the security forces helps to fan the communal forces in the valley. Repression on women by the security forces also pushed women to comply with the dictates of fundamentalist forces and justifies the return to purdah in order to protect themselves.

Yes, in spite of the situation, we were again and again surprised at the warmth and trust with which we were welcomed. We were also amazed at the courage of the people who managed to protest against the fundamentalists. For instance, in a letter addressed to the militants three women from Baramulla have asked them not to interfere in the education of the children. The language is guarded but the appeal is clear.

A concerned journalist friend in Delhi gave us the letter in which Shri Badhwar has made the following suggestions to the Governor.

“May I suggest a few steps to tackle the situation”

1. A massive government propaganda campaign to counter loudspeaker for loudspeaker, leaflet, the militant propaganda. This could be planned by a good advertising agency with the help of people from the Valley, preferably a couple of moulvis. The execution will have to be assisted by the security forces. JAKLI (Jammu & Kashmir Light Infantry) of the army could be used for this purpose.
2. Authorise the security forces to enter and search, confiscate all loudspeakers and cassettes and arrest suspects, from any mosque from which seditious announcements are heard. Also a total ban on the use of loudspeakers at night, would help.
3. Authorise security forces to search all printing presses and houses for capturing subversive leaflets and arrest suspects.
4. An electronic blanket, if such a thing is feasible to prevent people in the Valley listening to Radio Pakistan.

We vehemently disagree with such a sinister solution to the problem. The cases documented in our report bear testimony to the fact that the use of the security forces for internal security has only antagonised the people of Kashmir not only from the armed forces but also from the rest of the country. It is a politically bankrupt approach which resorts to military solutions to political problems.

Post Script

While this report was in the Press; the Governor of Jammu and Kashmir notified the entire Kashmir Valley and the border areas of the Jammu region as a disturbed area. With promulgation of Armed Forces (J'K) Special Powers Ordinance, 1990, Indian Army has acquired control in the areas notified as 'disturbed'. It is certain that on the expiry of Governor's rule on July 18 the state will be brought under President's rule.

In the light of our findings these latest measures would deny the civilian population in the Valley the last vestiges of legal protection.